



Draft
**2020 Analysis of
Impediments to
Fair Housing
Choice**

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

MARCH 2020



City of Birmingham

Draft 2020 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice

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I. Executive Summary

Throughout its history, the City of Birmingham has been a leader in forging a community-driven sense of belonging and wellbeing for its residents. A key component of such place-based wellbeing is the ability to secure and maintain a safe and adequate home free from discrimination. As Birmingham looks ahead to its future, ensuring that residents are not limited in their access to housing choice and to opportunity based solely upon a protected characteristic, such as race, color, national origin, sex, familial status, or disability, remains a critical component of the City's mission.

With such mission in mind, the City of Birmingham and its Community Development Department produced this draft of the 2020 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) in conformance with the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) Final Rule (2015)¹ and as required for all U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Planning and Development (CPD) funding recipients.

This assessment serves as the foundation for Birmingham's long-term housing planning work to protect and to expand housing choice and access to opportunity for all its residents, regardless of special circumstances or membership in a class protected by federal law. The assessment process and the AI document were completed in collaboration with many stakeholders and include feedback from a variety of municipal departments, external stakeholders and advocates, nonprofit and for-profit entities, and individuals and families impacted by housing issues in the City of Birmingham. The data and policy analysis outlined throughout this document, combined with the valuable feedback of stakeholders, provides the necessary framework to evaluate current housing trends and conditions in Birmingham and to identify potential barriers or impediments to fair housing choice and access.

A. Summary of Assessment

The following section provides a chapter-by-chapter overview of the City of Birmingham's 2020 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, as well as key takeaways.

II. Introduction

Chapter II provides an overview of HUD requirements related to the duty of HUD CPD funding recipients to conduct an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, as well as a summary of key concepts and definitions discussed throughout the document.

III. Community Participation Process

Chapter III discusses the community engagement and participation process conducted by the City of Birmingham throughout the Analysis of Impediments assessment process. This chapter details results from discussions with local officials and key stakeholders, feedback received through three public meetings, and analyzes results of a community needs survey.

¹ Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) Final Rule, 80 FR 42271 (2015)



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Key findings:

- Overall, nearly 500 individuals contributed to the development of this Analysis of Impediments.
- The community needs survey, made available in English and Spanish, was conducted between November 12, 2019 and February 2, 2020, and it received 327 responses.
- Based on stakeholder discussions, there continues to be a need to educate residents on fair housing protections and outreach efforts, as well as on public service gaps for unsheltered youth and those experiencing chronic homelessness.
- There is also a growing need to address issues related to blight, safety, and social justice in Birmingham.

IV. Socioeconomic Profile

This chapter describes the socioeconomic patterns and trends within the City of Birmingham and across the region. The chapter discusses the age, race, and disability status of Birmingham residents in comparison to the region, as well as explores the historical and current trends related to housing availability and affordability.

Key findings:

- Between 2010 and 2017:
 - The City of Birmingham's population declined by 1.9 percent, approximately 4,000 residents.
 - At the same time, the city's population of residents over 62 years of age increased by 15.4 percent, while the populations of those under 18 and between the ages of 35 and 54 years old declined by at least 10 percent.
- Birmingham's household sizes are getting smaller, non-family households are increasing, and the city has the lowest proportion of family households with children in the region.
- Of persons with incomes below the poverty level, those who have a disability have a median income that is roughly 35 percent lower than that of persons without disabilities.
- More than half (54.6 percent) of the City of Birmingham's households are considered Low-and-Moderate income, earning under 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- Birmingham's housing profile consists of an aging housing stock that may not meet the long-term needs of its residents. Due to the high number of households with incomes below the poverty level and shifts in household size, there is a widening gap between housing choice and housing affordability.
- The high number of vacant units in Birmingham makes it more challenging to address issues related to safety, blight, and the spillover effects of declining home values in certain neighborhoods.

V. Data on Populations with Special Needs

Chapter V explores the housing needs and challenges of residents with special needs, including: people experiencing homelessness, persons with disabilities, seniors, people identifying as LGBTQ+, people living with HIV/AIDS, survivors of domestic violence, and residents who live in public housing. These



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populations often have special needs which can make finding, securing, and/or maintaining safe and affordable housing more challenging. The chapter uses data to understand the needs of these subpopulations and provides an analysis of specific fair housing trends or patterns that are disproportionately affecting these communities.

Key findings:

- In the January 2019 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, the City of Birmingham had 854 households experiencing homelessness, most of whom were unsheltered single adult couples.
- LGBTQ+ persons face housing discrimination, such as being denied access to single-gender homeless shelters. To improve relations among the LGBTQ+ community, Birmingham's mayor recently hired an LGBTQ liaison to serve as both a spokesperson for the City and as a representative of LGBTQ+ interests.
- In 2017, Birmingham had approximately 40,000 residents living with disabilities, 18 percent of the non-institutionalized population; this is the highest proportion of residents with disabilities in comparison to Shelby and Jefferson counties. Housing choice for persons who have incomes below the poverty level and who have a disability may be challenging due to the limited availability of affordable and accessible housing, as well as community resistance to the construction of affordable housing for persons with disabilities, in communities that have access to services and opportunity.

VI. Housing Profile

This chapter provides an overview of selected housing trends for the City of Birmingham. The analysis examines the type of housing available to Birmingham residents, the rate at which new housing units are constructed, housing affordability, foreclosure rates, and other housing-related data points to provide insight into housing access and potential fair housing barriers for Birmingham residents.

Key findings:

- Birmingham's housing profile consists of an aging housing stock that may not meet the long-term needs of its residents. Due to the high number of households living below the poverty level and shifting household sizes, there is a widening gap in housing choice and affordability.
- Over 60 percent of Birmingham's housing units are 1-unit detached, stand-alone units. These housing units do not match the affordability range of Birmingham residents or its shifting household demographics.
- Birmingham has a high number of vacant units, which makes it more challenging to address issues related to safety, blight, and the spillover effects of declining home values in certain neighborhoods.
- About 37 percent of Birmingham's low-income owner-occupied households are cost-burdened and 60 percent are severely cost-burdened. Moreover, 57 percent of low-income renter-households are cost-burdened.



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VII. Segregation & Integration

This chapter reviews the patterns of segregation and integration present in Birmingham. The history of housing segregation in Birmingham includes redlining, segregation, and disparities in mortgage lending. This chapter uses federal and local data to explore and understand current patterns of segregation in Birmingham and its impact on residents.

Key findings:

- The percentage of Racially and Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty (R/ECAPs) in Birmingham increased from 14 in 2010 to 19 in 2017, representing decreased opportunities for communities of color living below the poverty threshold.
- Birmingham's segregation levels are high between White residents and all other non-White racial and ethnic groups living in Birmingham.
- Historical forms of social and spatial discrimination are still evident today in current patterns of residential segregation based on race and economics.

VIII. Access to Opportunity

Chapter VIII provides an overview of federal and local data sources, as well as community stakeholder feedback, to examine access to opportunity for Birmingham's residents who are members of protected classes. This chapter also discusses access to education, affordable transportation, employment opportunities, environmental health, housing quality, exposure to lead-based paint, and broadband access.

Key findings:

- Uneven access to opportunity for members of protected classes, particularly African American households, creates additional housing hurdles.
- Exposure to environmental hazards continues to be an issue for certain pockets of the population, particularly low-income households and African American families.
- Access to adequate education, transit, and higher-paying wages impacts the wellbeing of low-income households in the jurisdiction.

IX. Homeownership and Lending Analysis

This chapter analyzes current lending patterns within Birmingham and the greater metropolitan area to assess overall access to home lending for members of protected classes and to identify potential barriers to fair housing.

Key findings:

- Access to adequate home lending continues to disproportionately impact low-income households and protected classes, particularly African American borrowers.
- A shift by lending institutions to conventional loans may signal less access to capital for protected classes in the near future.



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- Debt-to-income ratios and credit histories are the main reasons for loan denials in the jurisdiction.

X. Review of Local Regulations and Policies

Chapter X examines critical public and private policies and practices, and it explores their potential impact on fair housing choice in Birmingham. Though examples of such policies and practices and their effects vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, in general, public and private policies should aim to further fair housing goals and to proactively address potentially discriminatory practices and trends.

Key findings:

- The City of Birmingham has made significant strides to update its zoning and land use policies, though some challenges remain to effectively safeguard housing access for protected classes.
- The City of Birmingham and its Department of Planning, Engineering, and Permits have made significant progress in expanding multifamily development and other uses for members of protected classes through the City's neighborhood framework, planning, and updates to its Comprehensive Plan.
- Social services continue to play a crucial role in addressing housing needs beyond the physical structure of a home.

XI. Program and Portfolio Analysis

Chapter XI reviews the demographics of participants, and those eligible for participation, in federally-funded housing programs within the City of Birmingham. Such a review helps to determine if available programs are adequately serving eligible persons within the jurisdiction.

Key findings:

- The City of Birmingham manages the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the Emergency Shelter Grants Program (ESG), the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program (HOPWA) federal programs.
- Based on Birmingham's 2018 Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER), the City provided assistance to 165 homeowners and provided technical assistance to 412 local businesses.
- Within the City of Birmingham, there are 11,976 publicly-supported housing units. Most publicly-supported housing units are in the form of traditional public housing, which provides approximately 5,000 housing units in Birmingham, followed by Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV), which supports 4,451 housing units.

XII. Fair Housing Trends and Complaints

This chapter reviews the fair housing enforcement process and fair housing complaints filed at the local and federal levels to assess trends, emerging issues, and potential barriers to fair housing access, enforcement, and education in Birmingham.



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Key findings:

- From 2006 to 2016 (the period for which data was available for this assessment), Jefferson and Shelby Counties recorded 173 fair housing complaints filed with HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Employment Opportunity (FHEO).
- In 2018, the most common type of housing complaint in Northern Alabama was landlord/tenant based with 29 complaints, while housing complaints based on race followed with 11 complaints.
- While outreach and education efforts to inform the public on fair housing protections have resulted in significant progress for Birmingham, more will need to be done in the next five years to ensure that recent fair housing trends are curbed or eliminated, and that all residents are provided fair housing choice and access.

XIII. Review of Prior and Current Actions Taken to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing

Chapter XIII presents the impediments to fair housing choice previously identified in 2015 and a summary of the actions taken to address those challenges. The analysis and its results help outline the underlying conditions and trends that are still relevant in Birmingham today.

Key findings:

- The City of Birmingham continues to work with stakeholders and other local agencies to remedy the impact of ongoing barriers to fair housing identified in 2015.
- The ongoing actions range from direct and indirect programs, services, funding allocations, and outreach to the public.
- The framework planning process continues to be a tool the City uses to assess and address potential barriers to fair housing in the jurisdiction.

XIV. 2020 Impediments to Fair Housing Choice

This chapter presents the impediments to fair housing choice identified through the 2020 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice assessment process for the City of Birmingham.

Key findings:

- Previously identified impediments related to environmental justice, access to transit and greater economic opportunity, home lending disparities, and income gaps continue to be barriers to fair housing in the jurisdiction.
- Newly identify barriers related to some local zoning policies, patterns of segregation, and housing quality highlight the ongoing challenges faced by residents of Birmingham.
- The City of Birmingham will use the diverse toolkit it has available to it to address barriers identified in the assessment.

XV. Conclusions and Public Comment

This chapter, drafted after the Public Comment Period ends, provides a summary of the conclusions of the assessment process and the official response from the City of Birmingham to the comments received during the Public Comment Period.



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B. 2020 Identified Impediments to Fair Housing Choice

Using the information and analysis outlined in the following chapters as its basis, the assessment also presents the following barriers or impediments to fair and affordable housing in the jurisdiction:

- **Affordable Housing:** Lack of affordable housing units available to low-income residents, families, and other protected classes.
- **Housing Quality:** Available affordable housing stock is aging, while new housing production has not met the affordability or accessibility needs of low-income residents, older residents, persons with disabilities, and other protected classes.
- **Inequitable Community Development:** Lower wages, access to equitable transit, and inadequate educational opportunities for communities of color and protected classes impact housing stability, social mobility, and potential displacement.
- **Social and Environmental Justice:** Persistent social justice and environmental concerns for low-income and minority neighborhoods hinder fair housing protections and access to greater social opportunities.
- **Home Lending Disparities:** Low-income and protected classes lack equitable access to home lending opportunities and market capital.
- **Local Policies:** Some land use, zoning, and building code policies, such as site selection, limits on alternative housing, minimum floor space requirements, and a lack of a local accessibility building code, may create additional hurdles to housing choice and access for protected classes.
- **Reasonable Accommodation:** A lack of a reasonable accommodation protocol in the local zoning code creates ambiguity and potential housing access barriers for persons with disabilities.
- **Fair Housing Education and Enforcement:** A lack of community awareness of fair housing protections limit the impact of fair housing education and outreach efforts.
- **Segregation:** Historic segregation patterns and current concentrations of poverty continue to disproportionately impact communities of color and protected classes.

C. Conclusion

In many ways, a home is more than the brick, mortar, and shelter it provides. Home is where family and friends come together, where children go to school, and where workers come back to after the day's labor. As such, it is imperative that safe, accessible, and adequate homes for all residents continue to be protected and planned for in the City of Birmingham. The analysis provided, the impediments to fair housing choice identified, and the proposed action items outlined here serve as a road map for the City of Birmingham as it works to achieve its fair housing goals and meet the needs of all residents over the next five years and into the foreseeable future.



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II. Introduction

Funding provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) comes with the obligation to affirmatively further fair housing. Such a requirement comes from the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which gives HUD a lead role in administering the Fair Housing Act. In 2015, HUD finalized the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) Final Rule requiring HUD Community Planning and Development (CPD) funding recipients to complete an Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) using HUD-created tools and resources. The AFFH Final Rule AFH requirement has since been suspended and the HUD tools and resources required by jurisdictions to complete an AFH have not been finalized. As such, the City of Birmingham is assessing fair housing issues and affirmatively furthering fair housing goals through the use of the regulations that pre-existed the 2015 AFFH Final Rule.

The pre-existing HUD regulations require Birmingham to perform an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI). In 2018, HUD re-affirmed the process by specifying that jurisdictions should conduct an AI within their area, take appropriate actions to overcome the effects of any impediments identified through that analysis, and maintain records reflecting the analysis and actions, as was the process prior to the AFFH Final Rule. Following such a mandate, the City of Birmingham is maintaining its fair housing planning obligation through the completion of this AI. The AI covers policies, practices, and procedures affecting housing choice for the city and its role as the primary grantee of HUD CPD funding in the jurisdiction.

The City of Birmingham, through its Community Development Department, currently administers the following HUD-funded federal programs:

- Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)
- HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME)
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program (HOPWA)
- Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG)

These programs help to address an array of housing and community needs in the jurisdiction, including housing affordability, access to housing, homelessness, and other public services and improvement gaps. This assessment focuses on how these programs, coupled with other local public and private policies and actions, help to further fair housing goals or implicitly or explicitly create additional barriers impeding fair housing choice and access in Birmingham.

A. Definitions

A key part of this fair housing assessment is the identification of potential impediments to fair housing choice. According to HUD's *Fair Housing Planning Guide, Volume 1*, "impediments to fair housing choice" are:²

² U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, *Fair Housing Planning Guide, Volume 1*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/FHPG.PDF>



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- “Actions, omissions, or decisions taken because of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status or national origin, which restrict housing choices or the availability of housing choices.”
- “Actions, omissions, or decisions which have the effect of restricting housing choices or the availability of housing choices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status or national origin.”

There are three components of an impediment to note:

1. A fair housing impediment must be an identified matter that directly or indirectly (has the effect of) creating a barrier to fair housing choice.
2. An impediment must have a disproportionate effect on a protected class.
3. An impediment must be caused by an “action, omission, or decision.”

Through the assessment process noted above, some of the identified potential barriers, or symptoms of barriers to housing choice, may be linked to one or more protected classes or to a particular action, omission, or decision. Some potential barriers do not necessarily fall within HUD’s definition of “impediment,” but have been noted in this document to provide context and additional information regarding current fair housing conditions in Birmingham.

B. Data Sources

The primary data sources for this document include the U.S. Census Bureau’s five-year 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS), the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2010 Decennial Census, HUD’s Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy Data (2011-2015), the City of Birmingham’s Comprehensive Plan, previous Consolidated Plans, and other neighborhood-based planning and framework efforts. Whenever possible, citywide data is compared with the available county or regional data.

III. Community Participation Process

A. Community Engagement Overview

Community and stakeholder participation are central to the development of the City of Birmingham’s Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. Throughout AI the process, the City of Birmingham met with local officials and stakeholders, held public meetings and hosted a community-wide survey to achieve broad, meaningful engagement. The feedback and results from these engagement activities were used to help identify barriers to fair housing that will be addressed through the AI process.

1. Kick-off Meetings

In December 2019, City of Birmingham staff met with several key stakeholders active in housing advocacy, including members of the Continuum of Care (CoC), Northern Alabama Fair Housing Center, and Housing Authority of the Birmingham District, to identify barriers and opportunities for housing access. Discussions focused on residential and community development, emerging trends, and potential collaboration between city departments. These discussions informed the data collection and analysis found throughout the AI.



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2. Public Meetings

The City of Birmingham hosted three public meetings in its development of the AI. The public meetings provided an overview of the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice process, included discussion of existing housing and community conditions and needs, and highlighted key emerging housing issues.

The meetings consisted of a presentation, which provided an overview of the AI process and reviewed current programs, initial demographic analysis, and previous findings. The remainder of each meeting included a collaborative discussion of community needs, changes, and challenges.

- **Public Meeting 1:** The first meeting took place on Wednesday, December 11, 2019 at Birmingham City Hall, 710 20th St. N., Birmingham, AL from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Two persons attended this meeting.
- **Public Meetings 2 and 3:** The second and third public meetings both took place on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 and were also held at Birmingham City Hall. The first meeting took place from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.; 53 persons attended. The second meeting was held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.; 16 persons attended.

Key takeaways from these initial public meetings included the continued need to educate residents on fair housing protections and outreach efforts, public service gaps for unsheltered youth and those experiencing chronic homelessness, and a growing need to address issues related to blight, safety, and social justice in the jurisdiction.

3. Stakeholder Engagement

The City engaged stakeholders throughout the AI development including a series of focus group meetings and one-on-one consultation interviews. This section provides an overview of the focus groups and stakeholder interviews. Including the interviews, survey, and focus groups, nearly 500 individuals have provided direct feedback to the drafting process of this assessment.

a) Focus Groups

Focus groups provided an opportunity for City Departments, and key organizations related to fair housing to develop goals for the Analysis of Impediments, review initial data collection and discuss previously identified impediments to fair housing. The City of Birmingham Office of Community Development consulted with several City departments and stakeholders to participate in these focus group meetings.

1. City Departments:
 - City of Birmingham Mayor's Office
 - City of Birmingham Office of Community Development
 - City of Birmingham Office of Social Justice of Racial Equity
 - City of Birmingham Department of Planning, Engineering & Permits
 - City of Birmingham Department of Transportation
 - City of Birmingham Office of Peace & Policy
 - City of Birmingham Operations Manager
2. Continuum of Care:



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- One Roof: Lead CoC organization, with a mission to connect individuals and families to appropriate resources related to their housing and service needs in Jefferson, St. Clair, and Shelby counties.
 - First Light, Inc: Manages a Center for Homeless Women and Children located in the heart of downtown Birmingham.
3. Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama: The agency is one of three fair housing organizations in the Deep South. It provides services to a seven-county service area, including Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, Blount, Walker, Bibb, and Etowah Counties.

b) Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews provide deeper insight into fair housing issues in the City of Birmingham. The City selected stakeholders that align with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) guidance to engage a diverse range of stakeholders who can leverage their expertise, resources, and investments toward strategies that will have the broadest impact in terms of creating access to opportunity-by reducing segregation, investing in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, and increasing opportunities for mobility.³ The purpose of these conversations was to gain insight and feedback on previously identified impediments and current challenges in their respective areas of expertise concerning housing access. The City interviewed the following stakeholders to inform the development of the AI document:

- **Independent Living Resources:** Provides direct services to persons with disabilities and the elderly.
- **AIDS Alabama:** Provides direct services to persons living with HIV/AIDS in the jurisdiction.
- **Crisis Center:** Provides direct services to persons experiencing a personal crisis or mental health issues.
- **Fair Housing Center:** Provides fair housing education and the means for residents to present fair housing complaints.
- **One Roof:** Provides direct services to persons experiencing homelessness.
- **Habitat for Humanity:** Provides access to housing choice to low-income households.
- **YWCA Central Alabama:** Provides direct services to low-income households, the youth, and the senior population of the area.

4. Community Survey

In addition to public meetings and stakeholder interviews, the City of Birmingham hosted an online community needs survey to solicit feedback on fair housing and community needs. The survey was available online and in hard copy form from November 12, 2019 until February 2, 2020 in both English and Spanish. The City distributed the online survey to the City's existing database of stakeholders and advertised widely during community meetings related to the Fair Housing Planning process and neighborhood association meetings. Physical copies of the survey were available in various libraries

³ Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule | Assessment of Fair Housing | Potential Roles for Stakeholders in the AFH Process. Policy Link. Available at: https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/AFH_Roles_Matrix%20.pdf



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across the City. Overall, the survey collected 320 responses to the English survey and seven responses to the Spanish survey. The following section supplies an overview of the community survey results.

B. Community Engagement Results

1. Community Needs Survey Respondents

About 327 people participated in the AI community survey. Of these respondents, over 80 percent live in Birmingham and 59 percent live in the following zip codes:

Table 1: Community Respondents by Zip Code

Zip Code	Responses
35205	31
35211	27
35204	22
35207	20
35215	20
35212	17
35222	15
35206	15
35234	14
35208	11

Source: 2019 City of Birmingham Community Needs Survey

Respondents are largely female (71 percent), employed (64 percent), Black or African American (59 percent, 37 percent were White), earn \$50,000 or more (49 percent), and own a home (75 percent). Respondents were also civically engaged, with 79 percent regularly participating in Birmingham recreational, cultural, or leisure activities.

2. Community Needs Survey Results

The community survey posed questions related to neighborhood quality, housing conditions, and fair housing issues. Respondents identified neighborhood infrastructure, economic development and job creation, vacant properties, and displacement as major barriers to fair housing.

- About 57 percent think the physical space in their neighborhood is declining.
- 82 percent think economic development/job creation is a critical issue.
- 94 percent think abandoned, or foreclosed properties are a critical issue.
- 58 percent think gentrification or displacement is a critical issue.

Other trends that emerged from the survey include:

- Streets, sidewalks, and the neighborhood were the top things respondents would change if they could change one thing about their community.
- Streets and sidewalks are issues for persons with disabilities. Twenty-four percent of respondents are disabled or have someone in their household with a disability. These respondents identified having trouble getting around their neighborhood due to its condition, such as broken sidewalks or poor street lighting, as major challenges



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- Community development needs were ranked in the following order from most important to least:
 1. Safe and affordable housing – Most important
 2. Infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, parks)
 3. Economic development (job training, workforce development, etc.)
 4. Community/Neighborhood Services
 5. Community/Neighborhood Facilities – Least important
- Job training/readiness, health/behavioral services, and homeless services were identified as the most needed public services.
- About 41 percent think the physical condition of housing in their neighborhood is declining, while 34 percent think it is stable, and 25 percent think it is improving.

a) Access to Housing

- About 53 percent of respondents are satisfied with their living situation. Those who were not don't feel safe, think there is poor access to good schools or other neighborhood amenities, and have poor housing conditions.
- Similarly, 61 percent of respondents do not want to move; however, 26 percent cannot afford to move, and 10 percent cannot find a better place to live.
- The major barriers preventing persons who want to move to another part of Birmingham from moving included being able to afford to move and being able to afford moving expenses.
- Persons who were denied when looking for housing were mostly denied because of bad credit and low-income.
- About 15 percent of respondents have felt discriminated against when looking for housing, while 8 percent are not sure. For those who have felt discriminated against, 71 percent did nothing about it.

Full survey results are available in Appendix A.



IV. Socioeconomic Profile

This section provides an overview of key socioeconomic trends within the City of Birmingham and across the region, including Jefferson and Shelby Counties. An analysis of demographic and economic data provides insight into trends and patterns that may impact housing choice with an overview of the characteristics of protected classes and patterns of segregation.

A. Demographics

This section provides an overview of demographic patterns and trends within the City of Birmingham in comparison to the region and state.

1. Population

In 2017, the City of Birmingham had a total population of 212,265, a decline of 1.9 percent since 2010 (216,392). Jefferson County remained stable, while Shelby County saw a population spike of 11.1 percent, or approximately 21,000 persons. The State of Alabama saw moderate growth of 2.9 percent in the same period.

Table 2: Population Growth, 2010 - 2017

Geography	2010	2017	Percent Change 2010 - 2017	Average Annual Growth Rate 2010-2017
Birmingham	216,392	212,265	-1.9%	-0.3%
Jefferson County	656,912	659,460	0.4%	0.1%
Shelby County	187,880	208,721	11.1%	1.6%
Alabama	4,712,651	4,850,771	2.9%	0.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

2. Age

Since 2010, the City of Birmingham’s population over age 62 has increased, while populations under 54 have generally declined, signaling a demographic shift within the city. Between 2010 and 2017, the population over 62 years increased by 15.4 percent, while those below 18 and between the ages of 35 and 54 years declined by at least 10 percent. An aging population usually requires more public services to accommodate the physical and social needs of this segment of the population. At the same time, minimal increase or stagnation in the working-age population, as shown in the table below, poses potential long-term hurdles in maintaining the city’s tax base if these trends continue.



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Table 3: Population by Age, Birmingham, 2010 - 2017

	2010	2017	Percent Change 2010-2017
Under 5 years	14,137	13,799	-2.4%
5 to 9 years	12,416	12,632	1.7%
10 to 14 years	13,474	10,516	-22.0%
15 to 19 years	14,495	11,952	-17.5%
20 to 24 years	18,033	18,871	4.6%
25 to 34 years	33,513	36,408	8.6%
35 to 44 years	26,992	24,232	-10.2%
45 to 54 years	32,616	25,862	-20.7%
55 to 59 years	13,183	15,085	14.4%
60 to 64 years	10,423	13,585	30.3%
65 to 74 years	13,193	16,447	24.7%
75 to 84 years	9,741	8,944	-8.2%
85 years and over	4,176	3,932	-5.8%
Median age (years)	35.9	35.7	
Under 18 years	48,255	42,978	-10.9%
16 years and over	173,763	173,536	-0.1%
18 years and over	168,183	169,287	0.7%
21 years and over	158,263	159,380	0.7%
62 years and over	32,434	37,430	15.4%
65 years and over	27,110	29,323	8.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

3. Gender

Of Birmingham’s 212,265 residents, 52.7 percent or 111,811 residents are female. When seeking housing, women are more likely to face certain types of discrimination than men, including sexual harassment by housing providers, discrimination based on familial status, and discrimination based on a history of domestic violence. According to Lisa Rice, CEO of the National Fair Housing Alliance, women are the targets of sexual harassment and assault from landlords, maintenance staff, real estate agents, mortgage lenders, and other housing staff.⁴ The National Housing Law Project also states that women are the majority of domestic violence survivors and can experience discrimination based stereotypes around survivors of domestic violence and past evictions or credit issues associated with domestic violence.⁵

⁴ Haverty, Laura. 2019. Why Equal Housing for Women Will Continue to Be a ‘Tough Road.’ NBC. Available at: <https://www.nbcnews.com/known-your-value/feature/why-equal-housing-women-will-continue-be-tough-road-ncna1038266>

⁵ National Housing Law Project. 2020. Available at: <https://www.nhlp.org/initiatives/fair-housing-housing-for-people-with-disabilities/fair-housing-and-domestic-violence/>



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4. Race and Ethnicity

The majority of Jefferson County’s Black or African American population is concentrated within the City of Birmingham. In 2017, 71.6 percent of the City of Birmingham identified as Black or African American, while 42.6 percent of the county identified as Black or African American. Although Birmingham and Jefferson County are primarily Black or African American and White, approximately 3.5 percent of both jurisdictions identify as Hispanic or Latino.

Table 4: Population by Race and Ethnicity, City of Birmingham and Jefferson County, 2017

	Birmingham		Jefferson County	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Race (Not Hispanic or Latino)				
Total population	212,265	(X)	659,460	(X)
One race	209,402	98.7%	649,095	98.4%
White	52,201	24.6%	343,449	52.1%
Black or African American	151,878	71.6%	280,804	42.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native	405	0.2%	1,550	0.2%
Asian	1,802	0.8%	10,187	1.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	20	0.0%	184	0.0%
Some other race	3,096	1.5%	12,921	2.0%
Two or more races	2,863	1.3%	10,365	1.6%
Hispanic or Latino of Any Race				
Total population	212,265	(X)	659,460	(X)
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	7,332	3.5%	24,692	3.7%
Not Hispanic or Latino	204,933	96.5%	634,768	96.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

While the City of Birmingham lost about 4,000 residents between 2010 and 2017, it gained approximately 2,600 White residents, and lost approximately 8,000 Black or African American residents. Additionally, the City of Birmingham lost a small portion of Asian residents (approximately 300 people) and gained approximately 350 Hispanic or Latino residents.



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Table 5: Population by Race and Ethnicity, Birmingham, 2010-2017

	2010	2017	Percent Change 2010-2017
Race (Not Hispanic or Latino)			
Total population	216,392	212,265	-1.9%
One race	215,015	209,402	-2.6%
White	49,578	52,201	5.3%
Black or African American	159,874	151,878	-5.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native	339	405	19.5%
Asian	2,148	1,802	-16.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	19	20	5.3%
Some other race	3,057	3,096	1.3%
Two or more races	1,377	2,863	107.9%
Hispanic or Latino of Any Race			
Total population	216,392	212,265	-1.9%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	6,843	7,332	7.1%
Not Hispanic or Latino	209,549	204,933	-2.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

5. Household Familial Composition

An analysis of the average household and family size provides insight into local housing needs and demographic patterns. Based on the American Community Survey, Birmingham has a slightly smaller average household and family size than the region and the state, as seen in the table below. The average household size in Birmingham is 2.3, while the average family size is 3.1.

Table 6: Average Household and Family Size, 2017

	Birmingham	Jefferson County	Shelby County	Alabama
Average Household Size	2.3	2.5	2.7	2.6
Average Family Size	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Between 2010 and 2017, the average household size in Birmingham stayed stable. The average family size also remained stable.

Table 7: Average Household and Family Size, Birmingham, 2010 - 2017

	2010	2017
Average Household Size	2.3	2.3
Average Family Size	3.1	3.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The City of Birmingham has the largest share of non-family households (47.6 percent) across the region and state. Given the large proportion of non-family households in Birmingham, there is likely to be greater demand for multifamily and single-occupied units throughout the city.



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Table 8: Household Type by Household Size, 2017

	Birmingham	Jefferson County	Shelby County	Alabama
Total Household	90,149	261,390	76,868	1,856,695
Percent Family Households	52.4%	63.3%	71.7%	66.5%
Percent Non-Family Households	47.6%	36.7%	28.3%	33.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The table below provides an overview of household types for the city, region, and state. In comparison to the region and state, Birmingham has the lowest percentage of family households with children. Family households with children in Jefferson and Shelby counties, as well as statewide all comprise over 26 percent of households, compared to 20 percent in Birmingham. The city, however, has the highest proportion of female householders and female householders with children. Female householders comprise 23 percent of Birmingham households, which is significantly higher than the region (18 percent in Jefferson County and 9 percent in Shelby County) and the state (15 percent). Meanwhile, female householders with children make up nearly 12 percent of households in Birmingham, which exceeds that of the region (9 percent in Jefferson County and 5 percent in Shelby County) and the state (9 percent).

According to the National Women’s Law Center, female-headed households with children are more likely to live in poverty than male-headed or married couple households. This statistic would indicate a demand for high-quality, affordable housing.⁶ Additionally, housing discrimination based on underlying stereotypes of female-headed households with children impacts people of color in particular when looking to rent or purchase a home, as stated in HUD’s 2012 Housing Discrimination Against Racial and Ethnic Minorities report.⁷

⁶ Insecure and Unequal, Poverty and Income Among Women and Families 2000-2013, The National Women’s Law Center, 2014. https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/final_2014_nwlc_poverty_report.pdf

⁷ Housing Discrimination Against Racial and Ethnic Minorities 2012, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, June 2013. https://www.huduser.gov/portal/Publications/pdf/HUD-514_HDS2012_execsumm.pdf



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Table 9: Household Type, 2017

Household Type	Birmingham	Percent of Households	Jefferson County	Percent of Households	Shelby County	Percent of Households	Alabama	Percent of Households
Family households	47,262	52.4%	165,380	63.3%	55,148	71.7%	1,233,863	66.5%
Family households with children	18,227	20.2%	68,914	26.4%	24,128	31.4%	493,516	26.6%
Married-couple households	21,884	24.3%	107,264	41.0%	45,654	59.4%	879,924	47.4%
Married-couple households with children	6,079	6.7%	40,103	15.3%	19,521	25.4%	314,821	17.0%
Female householders	20,867	23.1%	46,710	17.9%	7,100	9.2%	274,361	14.8%
Female householders with children	10,611	11.8%	24,417	9.3%	3,677	4.8%	145,300	7.8%
Nonfamily households	42,887	47.6%	96,010	36.7%	21,720	28.3%	622,832	33.5%
Total Households	90,149	(X)	165,380	(X)	76,868	(X)	1,856,695	(X)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Nonfamily households are increasing in Birmingham. The percentage of nonfamily households increased from 44.7 percent in 2010 to 47.6 percent in 2017. Meanwhile, family households overall are declining across all household types. From 2010 to 2017, family households declined 2.9 percent, married-couple households declined 2.2 percent, and households with children declined 3.2 percent. As nonfamily households continue to grow, demand for smaller and more affordable housing is likely to increase, improving the market for multi-family and small single-family homes.

Table 10: Household Type, Birmingham, 2010-2017

Household Types, 2017	2010	Percent of Households	2017	Percent of Households
Family households	49,973	55.3%	47,262	52.4%
Family households with children	20,808	23.0%	18,227	20.2%
Married-couple households	23,934	26.5%	21,884	24.3%
Married-couple households with children	7,822	8.7%	6,079	6.7%
Female householders	21,637	24.0%	20,867	23.1%
Female householders with children	11,422	12.6%	10,611	11.8%
Nonfamily households	40,359	44.7%	42,887	47.6%
Total Households	90,332	(X)	90,149	(X)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



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6. Disability

The most prevalent disability types in Birmingham are ambulatory, cognitive, and independent living. As defined by the Census, an ambulatory disability is having serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs, while a cognitive disability includes a physical, mental, or emotional problem, having difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions. Lastly, independent living is defined as a physical, mental, or emotional problem, having difficulties doing errands alone, such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping.⁸

Ambulatory (7.7 percent) or cognitive disability (5.8 percent) are most common for persons under 65. Those over 65 years are also most likely to experience an ambulatory (33.5 percent) disability, followed by an independent living disability (19.5 percent). These figures denote the need for accessible and supportive housing for all age groups in Birmingham. As the population continues to age, the demand for affordable and accessible supportive housing is likely to increase.

Table 11: Disability Type by Age Group, Birmingham, 2017

Disability Type	Population with a Disability		65 Years and Over		Under 65 Years	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Ambulatory	23,283	11.1%	9,427	33.5%	13,856	7.7%
Cognitive	13,859	6.6%	3,341	11.9%	10,518	5.8%
Hearing Difficulty	6,184	3.0%	3,187	11.3%	2,997	1.7%
Independent Living	13,155	6.3%	5,500	19.5%	7,655	4.2%
Self-Care	8,373	4.0%	3,766	13.4%	4,607	2.5%
Vision Difficulty	7,749	3.7%	2,626	9.3%	5,123	2.8%
Total Population (With and Without a Disability)	209,121	(X)	28,134	(X)	180,987	(X)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Note: Total population with a Disability includes institutionalized and non-institutionalized populations. Independent Living only includes those 18 to 64 years.

Approximately one in five persons in Birmingham or Jefferson County who lives below the poverty level also has a disability. Additionally, the median income of persons below the poverty level who have a disability is roughly 35 percent lower than that of persons without a disability. The disparity in income levels between persons below the poverty level with and without a disability underscores the financial challenges for persons with a disability and the need for accessible, affordable housing.

⁸ U.S. Census Glossary, Disability, 2020
https://www.census.gov/topics/health/disability/about/glossary.html#par_textimage_1424535852



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Table 12: Disability and Income, 2017

	Birmingham		Jefferson County	
	Persons without a Disability	Persons with a Disability	Persons without a Disability	Persons with a Disability
Number of Persons Below Poverty Level	45,600	12,130	88,319	25,049
Median Income of Persons Below Poverty Level	\$24,965	\$16,337	\$32,144	\$20,818

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

The number of persons with disabilities who are below the poverty level in Birmingham remained the same from 2010 to 2017. The median income for this group slightly declined during the same period, by \$142. With the median income for persons with disabilities not increasing at the same rate as housing costs, this expands the mismatch between income and housing costs.

Table 13: Disability and Income, Birmingham, 2012-2017

	2012	2017
Persons with Disabilities Below Poverty Level	12,206	12,130
Median Income Persons with Disabilities Below Poverty Level	\$16,479	\$16,337

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Looking at the number of persons living with a disability in Birmingham also reveals that there is a significant number of seniors with a disability living within Birmingham and the surrounding counties of Jefferson and Shelby. As the table below highlights, in 2017, Jefferson County had more than double the persons who are 65 years and over living with a disability at 37,387 in comparison to Birmingham at 12,193 persons.

Table 14: Disability and Age 2017

	City of Birmingham	Jefferson County	Shelby County	State of Alabama
Total population aged 5 and over with a Disability	37,339	101,044	22,699	773,622
18 to 64-year-old with a Disability	22,838	56,762	11,363	418,171
65 and over with a Disability	12,193	37,387	9,556	305,928

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Between 2012 to 2017, the number of persons under 18 with a disability declined in the City of Birmingham. However, the senior population, which represents the majority of persons with a disability in the area, also slightly increased in the jurisdiction since 2012.



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Table 15: Disability Rate and Age, Birmingham, 2012-2017

	2012	Percent of Age Group	2017	Percent of Age Group	Population Percent Change from 2012 to 2017
Total population under 18 years with a Disability	2,695	5.7%	2,483	5.8%	-7.9%
18 to 64-year-old with a Disability	20,644	14.8%	22,838	16.9%	10.6%
65 years and over with a Disability	11,204	41.5%	12,193	43.3%	8.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

B. Economic Data

This section provides an overview of economic changes in the City of Birmingham including an examination of income and poverty, household income, area median income, and employment. Economic data provides insight into which populations are most impacted by the city’s cost of housing and which need access to transportation. An economic data assessment also shows the share of income across protected classes, which include race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and disability, as defined by the Fair Housing Act, as well as an understanding of how the city is shifting across industries.⁹

1. Income and Poverty

This section examines the intersection between race, income, poverty, and family status, to understand access to opportunity. For the purpose of this assessment, access to opportunity is defined as place-based and mobility strategies that secure and expand housing choice for protected classes and potential challenges to securing quality affordable housing.¹⁰

Compared to Jefferson County, a higher share of the City of Birmingham residents across all races and ethnicities live below the poverty level. In 2017, 30 percent of the City of Birmingham’s Black or African American population lived below the poverty level, while nearly 26 percent of Jefferson County’s Black or African American population was below the poverty level. Additionally, median household incomes in the city fall below median household incomes in Jefferson County by approximately 25 percent. Median household income highlights racial wealth disparities between Black or African American households and White households in the City of Birmingham. Black or African American households in Birmingham have a median household income of \$29,166, while White households’ median income is \$51,416.

⁹ HUD, “Housing Discrimination Under the Fair Housing Act,” Available at: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/fair_housing_act_overview

¹⁰ HUD Exchange, “What is a balanced approach to fair housing?,” Available at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/faqs/3016/what-is-a-balanced-approach-to-fair-housing/>



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Table 16: Income and Poverty by Race and Ethnicity, 2017

	Birmingham, AL			Jefferson County, AL		
	Total Households	Median Household Income	Percent Below Poverty Level	Total Households	Median Household Income	Percent Below Poverty Level
White	24,943	51,416	20.3%	141,779	64,469	10.0%
Black	62,532	29,166	30.3%	109,801	34,738	25.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native	237	-	32.7%	738	36,813	21.7%
Asian	847	52,173	16.7%	3,401	75,396	8.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	4	-	0.0%	54	-	9.8%
Some other race	769	29,688	40.9%	2,887	36,404	39.8%
Two or More Races	817	20,804	45.6%	2,730	40,696	24.7%
Hispanic	2,135	30,564	36.0%	6,468	37,333	34.0%
Total Households	90,149			261,390		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

*Hispanic ethnicity is counted independently of race. **Note: data not available.

Between 2012 to 2017, median household income rose substantially for the Asian population (by \$10,981), moderately for the White population (by \$7,318), and slightly for the Black population (by \$1,910) in Birmingham. During the same period, median household income declined for the Hispanic population (\$999), those who identify as Some Other Race (\$11,448) and those who are Two or More Races (\$29,509). Consequently, for these populations, the percentage of persons living in poverty also increased.

Table 17: Income and Poverty by Race and Ethnicity, Birmingham, 2012-2017

	2012		2017	
	Median Income	Percent Below Poverty Level	Median Income	Percent Below Poverty Level
White	44,098	18.8%	51,416	20.3%
Black	27,256	32.0%	29,166	30.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native	26,607	16.9%	-	32.7%
Asian	41,192	25.8%	52,173	16.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	41,736	33.3%	-	0.0%
Some other race**	41,136	24.4%	29,688	40.9%
Two or more races	50,313	27.7%	20,804	45.6%
Hispanic*	31,563	28.2%	30,564	36.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

*Hispanic ethnicity is counted independently of race.

Compared to Jefferson County, the City of Birmingham's households largely fall into income brackets under \$75,000, illustrated in the table below, indicating a concentration of lower income households in Birmingham. In 2017, Birmingham's median household income was \$33,770, with a mean household



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income of \$48,614. In Jefferson County, the median household income was considerably higher at \$49,321 and \$71,979 in mean household income. For both the city and the county, the largest share of income was within the \$50,000 to \$74,999 income range with 15.8 percent of the population in Birmingham and 17 percent in Jefferson county falling within this bracket. Household income for the city and county are both tied to the trends of housing affordability across income groups and the accessibility to housing types.

Table 18: Household Income, Birmingham and Jefferson County, 2017

Income and Benefits	Birmingham		Jefferson County	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total households	90,149	100%	261,390	100%
Less than \$10,000	13,080	14.5%	23,527	9.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	7,746	8.6%	15,747	6.0%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	14,283	15.8%	29,844	11.4%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	11,078	12.3%	27,810	10.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	12,990	14.4%	35,015	13.4%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	14,265	15.8%	44,411	17.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	7,476	8.3%	29,087	11.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	6,037	6.7%	31,186	11.9%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,639	1.8%	11,913	4.6%
\$200,000 or more	1,555	1.7%	12,850	4.9%
Median household income (dollars)	33,770	(X)	49,321	(X)
Mean household income (dollars)	48,614	(X)	71,979	(X)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

1. Low to Moderate Income

HUD uses low- and moderate-income (LMI) households as a threshold for many federal programs covered as part of the City’s Analysis of Impediments and Consolidated Plan. HUD defines LMI as households earning under 80 percent Area Median Income (AMI).¹¹ As described by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, such thresholds and definitions continue to matter as structural barriers continue to limit housing, economic outcomes, and mobility of LMI communities in the country.¹² Overall, the City of Birmingham has a higher percentage of LMI households (54.6 percent), compared to the state overall (41.4 percent).

¹¹ HUD, “Low and Moderate Definition under CDBG Program”, https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/rulesandregs/memoranda/lmid ef84

¹² Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, LMI Economic Conditions <https://www.kansascityfed.org/research/indicatorsdata/lmieconomicconditions/articles/2019/lmi-economic-conditions-feb-2019>



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Table 19: Low- and Moderate-Income Persons, 2015

	Total Low- and Moderate-Income Persons	Percent of Low- and Moderate-Income Persons in the Jurisdiction
City of Birmingham	162,550	54.6%
Jefferson County	288,740	44.9%
Shelby County	55,370	27.6%
Alabama	1,953,270	41.4%

Source: HUD ACS 5-Year 2011-2015 Low- and Moderate-Income Summary Data. Note: HUD defines LMI as households earning under 80 percent Area Median Income (AMI).

2. Family Income and Poverty

Families with children are more likely to experience poverty in the City of Birmingham. In 2017, 39.1 percent of all families with children under 18 years of age in Birmingham had incomes below the poverty level, in comparison to 23.5 percent of all families. The percentage is even higher for female-headed households with children under 18 years of age in Birmingham at 54.5 percent. This is also the highest percentage across the geographies, including the state.

Table 20: Families and People whose income in the past 12 months is Below Poverty Level, 2017

	Birmingham	Jefferson County	Shelby County	Alabama
All Families	23.5%	13.8%	5.0%	13.6%
With related children of householder under 18 years	39.1%	21.8%	7.4%	22.1%
Married-couple families	7.7%	4.9%	3.3%	5.9%
With related children of the householder under 18 years	12.9%	6.9%	4.5%	8.6%
Families with Female householder, no husband present	40.4%	33.5%	15.1%	36.5%
With related children of householder under 18 years	54.5%	43.9%	21.4%	47.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

Between 2010 and 2017, the number of families living below the poverty line in the City of Birmingham increased from 21.2 percent to 23.5 percent. The table below shows that the share of families in poverty increased across all categories in the City of Birmingham.

Table 21: Families and People whose income in the past 12 months are Below Poverty Level, Birmingham, 2010-2017

	2010	2017
All Families	21.2%	23.5%
With related children of householder under 18 years	32.7%	39.1%
Married-couple families	7.5%	7.7%
With related children of the householder under 18 years	12.2%	12.9%
Families with Female householder, no husband present	36.4%	40.4%
With related children of householder under 18 years	45.7%	54.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey



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3. Employment

The City of Birmingham has the highest unemployment rate compared to the region and state at 10.7 percent. The city's labor force participation rate falls behind Jefferson and Shelby Counties, but is slightly higher than the state overall.

Table 22: Labor Force Statistics, 2017

	Birmingham	Jefferson County	Shelby County	Alabama
Population 16 years and over	173,536	524,242	164,092	3,876,136
Labor Force Participation Rate	60.2%	62.2%	66.4%	57.6%
Employed	53.7%	57.4%	63.4%	53.0%
Unemployment Rate	10.7%	7.7%	4.3%	7.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

The City of Birmingham's unemployment rate declined from 12.9 percent in 2010 to 10.7 percent in 2017. A declining unemployment rate shows the health of the city's economy but does not reflect job quality or show differences across income levels.

Table 23: Labor Force Statistics, Birmingham, 2010-2017

	2010	2017
Population 16 years and over	173,717	173,536
Labor Force Participation Rate	61.4%	60.2%
Employed	53.4%	53.7%
Unemployment Rate	12.9%	10.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

Unemployment across the protected classes in Birmingham reveals the disparities in income and poverty across race and ethnicity. In 2017, the city's Black or African American population had the highest unemployment rate across protected classes with 13.3 percent unemployment, followed by Asian and Hispanic populations. The lowest unemployment rate was within the White population with 5.3 percent.

Table 24: Unemployment and Protected Classes, 2017

	Birmingham	Jefferson County	Shelby County	Alabama
	Unemployment Rate	Unemployment Rate	Unemployment Rate	Unemployment Rate
Civilian labor force	10.7%	7.7%	4.3%	7.4%
Male	10.5%	7.1%	3.6%	6.8%
Female	10.5%	7.4%	3.6%	7.1%
White	5.3%	4.7%	4.2%	5.8%
Black or African American	13.3%	11.8%	5.5%	11.9%
Asian	5.7%	1.4%	1.0%	3.9%
Some other race*	7.6%	5.5%	4.7%	6.1%
Hispanic**	7.7%	5.6%	4.4%	6.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey.

*Does not include Native American/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

**Hispanic ethnicity is counted independently of race.



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Birmingham’s Hispanic population saw an increase in the unemployment rate from 7 percent in 2010 up to 7.7 percent in 2017. On the other hand, the Black or African American population saw a decrease in the unemployment rate from 15.7 percent in 2010 to 13.3 percent in 2017.

Table 25: Unemployment and Protected Classes, Birmingham, 2010-2017

	2010	2017
	Unemployment Rate	Unemployment Rate
Civilian labor force	12.9%	10.7%
Male	12.5%	10.5%
Female	11.7%	10.5%
White	6.8%	5.3%
Black	15.7%	13.3%
Asian	6.0%	5.7%
Some other race*	5.1%	7.6%
Hispanic**	7.0%	7.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey.

*Does not include Native American/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. **Hispanic ethnicity is counted independently of race.

Educational services, healthcare, and social assistance make up the highest share of employment in the City of Birmingham (26.6 percent). Arts, entertainment, and food service (11.8 percent), retail (11.5 percent), and professional services (10.5 percent) make up the other top employers in Birmingham. This reflects the city’s position as a regional medical hub, but also demonstrates that service jobs play a prominent role in the city’s economy. While the city has a proud manufacturing history, it trails the state average for its share of manufacturing and construction jobs.



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Table 26: Employment by Industry, 2017

	Alabama		Birmingham, AL	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	2,055,509	2,055,509	93,129	93,129
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	32,311	1.6%	260	0.3%
Construction	131,822	6.4%	3,969	4.3%
Manufacturing	291,616	14.2%	7,811	8.4%
Wholesale trade	51,415	2.5%	2,325	2.5%
Retail trade	246,556	12.0%	10,756	11.5%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	107,083	5.2%	4,752	5.1%
Information	33,292	1.6%	2,320	2.5%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	115,160	5.6%	6,869	7.4%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	192,792	9.4%	9,773	10.5%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	462,536	22.5%	24,753	26.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	172,448	8.4%	10,943	11.8%
Other services, except public administration	105,209	5.1%	4,989	5.4%
Public administration	113,269	5.5%	3,609	3.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey.

As an economic center for the state, Birmingham has a high concentration of industries. Since 2010, however, this trend has seen some decline. For example, the construction industry declined in 2017 to 4.3 percent down from 6 percent and the manufacturing industry slowed to 8.4 percent down from 9 percent in 2010. Most other industries have remained the same with slight variations in employment. Notably, employment in the arts and entertainment industry has had an increase from 10.2 percent in 2010 to 11.8 percent in 2017.



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Table 27: Employment by Industry, Birmingham, 2010-2017

	2010	2017
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	92,727	93,129
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0.4%	0.3%
Construction	6.0%	4.3%
Manufacturing	9.0%	8.4%
Wholesale trade	3.1%	2.5%
Retail trade	11.4%	11.5%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.6%	5.1%
Information	2.6%	2.5%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.3%	7.4%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	10.0%	10.5%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	25.8%	26.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	10.2%	11.8%
Other services, except public administration	5.0%	5.4%
Public Administration	4.7%	3.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey.



V. Housing Profile

The following section provides an overview of selected housing trends for the City of Birmingham. The analysis examines the type of housing available to residents, the rate at which new housing units are constructed, housing affordability, foreclosure rates, and other housing-related data points to provide insight into housing access and potential fair housing barriers for Birmingham residents.

A. Housing Stock

A review of Birmingham’s housing stock provides a snapshot of housing development patterns and trends. The following sections provide key metrics of the local housing stock.

Birmingham’s housing profile reveals a struggling market with an aging housing stock that may not meet the long-term needs of its residents. From existing housing types to new construction, a widening gap of choice and affordability may restrict the social and economic mobility of residents, particularly low-income and protected classes. Moreover, a high number of vacant units in the jurisdiction make it more difficult to address issues related to safety, blight, and the spillover effects of declining home values in certain neighborhoods.

Despite such challenges, the city continues to strive for equitable housing solutions that allow residents to live, work, and play in Birmingham. From updates to its Comprehensive Plan to neighborhood-based Framework Plans, the City of Birmingham continues to look for proactive ways to meet the housing needs of all residents in the area.

1. Housing Units

In 2017, Birmingham had 112,756 housing units, which represented 5.1 percent of housing units within the State of Alabama. Between 2010 and 2017, the total housing units in Birmingham increased by 1.2 percent (1,381 units). Over the same time period, Jefferson County slightly outpaced the City, increasing the number of housing units by 2 percent (5,927 units), while Shelby County added a significant number of units, growing by 8 percent (6,283 units) during the same period. The City’s growth falls short of the overall growth of housing units in the State. Between 2010 and 2017 the State of Alabama’s housing units grew by 3.9 percent.

Table 28: Total Housing Units, 2010-2017

Total Housing Units	2010	2017	Percent Change 2010-2017
Birmingham	111,375	112,756	1.2%
Jefferson County	300,183	306,110	2.0%
Shelby County	78,760	85,043	8.0%
Alabama	2,146,513	2,231,126	3.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



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2. Age of Housing Stock

An examination of the age of Birmingham’s housing helps to determine levels of new housing construction and measures the disappearance of old housing from its inventory, including substandard housing, as defined by federal regulations, across the City.¹³

The vast majority of Birmingham’s housing stock (83.8 percent) was built over 30 years ago with approximately 50 percent of the housing stock developed from 1950 to 1979. Housing development has slowed significantly in recent years. In the years since the housing crisis of 2010, only 2,699 structures have been built, accounting for 2.4 percent of all housing units.

Table 29: Age of Housing Stock, Birmingham, 2017

Year Structure Built	2017	
	Estimate	Percent
Total housing units	112,756	(X)
Built 2014 or later	797	0.7%
Built 2010 to 2013	1,902	1.7%
Built 2000 to 2009	8,323	7.4%
Built 1990 to 1999	7,282	6.5%
Built 1980 to 1989	10,396	9.2%
Built 1970 to 1979	16,233	14.4%
Built 1960 to 1969	16,304	14.5%
Built 1950 to 1959	22,637	20.1%
Built 1940 to 1949	10,678	9.5%
Built 1939 or earlier	18,204	16.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

B. Housing Type

Examining the mix of housing choices throughout the City offers insight into resident housing preferences and whether preferences match the existing available housing stock. While Birmingham’s housing units are primarily single-family, it has a smaller proportion of single-family units than the region and the state as a whole. In 2017, 60.4 percent of housing units in Birmingham were 1-unit detached or single-family, stand-alone residential units. This percentage is lower than the percentage of 1-unit detached housing in Jefferson County (69.5 percent), neighboring Shelby County (74.2 percent) and the State of Alabama (68.6 percent). Beyond single-family detached units, the most common type of housing within Birmingham is multifamily housing, ranging from 10 to 20 or more units. As seen in the table below, 10 to 20 or more housing units comprise 21 percent of housing in Birmingham. Moderate scale multifamily housing offering between 2 to 9 units is limited in Birmingham, collectively comprising 16.2 percent of housing. Birmingham’s housing types include more variety when compared to the region or State, but limited options, outside of single-family and multifamily, restrict housing choice.

¹³Federal Code of Regulations, “Substandard housing” <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2000-title24-vol1/xml/CFR-2000-title24-vol1-sec5-425.xml>



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Table 30: Housing Type, 2017

Housing Type 2017	Birmingham, AL		Jefferson County, AL		Shelby County, AL		Alabama	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Units in Structure	112,756	100%	306,110	100%	85,043	100%	2,231,126	100.0%
Total housing units	112,756	100%	306,110	100%	85,043	100%	2,231,126	100.0%
1-unit, detached	68,096	60.4%	212,770	69.5%	63,065	74.2%	1,530,174	68.6%
1-unit, attached	1,681	1.5%	7,518	2.5%	4,556	5.4%	34,085	1.5%
2 units	2,520	2.2%	5,140	1.7%	526	0.6%	46,732	2.1%
3 or 4 units	5,457	4.8%	10,084	3.3%	1,145	1.3%	64,644	2.9%
5 to 9 units	10,326	9.2%	19,359	6.3%	2,301	2.7%	96,238	4.3%
10 to 19 units	11,397	10.1%	20,545	6.7%	3,360	4.0%	72,605	3.3%
20 or more units	12,411	11.0%	21,149	6.9%	2,941	3.5%	85,802	3.8%
Mobile home	814	0.7%	9,425	3.1%	7,062	8.3%	298,911	13.4%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	54	0.0%	120	0.0%	87	0.1%	1,935	0.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Between 2010 and 2017, Birmingham’s housing units increased by 1,381 units. During this period, the proportion of single-family housing units decreased by 2.2 percent, while all forms of multifamily housing, except for 1-unit attached housing saw increases. Housing of 5 to 9 units, 20 or more units, and mobile homes saw the most significant increases, all increasing by more than 10 percent between 2010 and 2017. The number of boats, RVs, vans, etc. also increased by 26 units during this period.

Table 30: Housing Type, Birmingham, 2010 and 2017

Housing Type 2017	2010		2017		2010-2017 Percent Change
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
Units in Structure	111,375	100.0%	112,756	100%	
Total housing units	111,375	100.0%	112,756	100%	
1-unit, detached	69,647	62.5%	68,096	60.4%	-2.2%
1-unit, attached	2,348	2.1%	1,681	1.5%	-28.4%
2 units	2,357	2.1%	2,520	2.2%	6.9%
3 or 4 units	5,028	4.5%	5,457	4.8%	8.5%
5 to 9 units	8,919	8.0%	10,326	9.2%	15.8%
10 to 19 units	11,268	10.1%	11,397	10.1%	1.1%
20 or more units	11,139	10.0%	12,411	11.0%	11.4%
Mobile home	641	0.6%	814	0.7%	27.0%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	28	0.0%	54	0.0%	92.9%

U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The multifamily housing, higher-end development of 20 or more units trend is set to continue, according to Rebusiness online, a national website that covers all aspects of the real estate industry. The Central Birmingham cluster, which encompasses the Central Business District, Southside, Parkside District, University of Alabama Birmingham, and Lakeview neighborhoods has established itself as a strong-performing submarket. The growing number of desirable amenities such as parks, restaurants, museums, and trails has helped foster rent growth and additional projects. Within the Birmingham metro itself, multifamily construction is highly concentrated in Central Birmingham. Despite higher construction costs, multifamily housing development has been able to continue due to higher rents that



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can make up the cost. Average rents per one-bedroom unit range between \$1,600 and \$1,000, while two-bedroom units average \$2,000. The Central Birmingham submarket maintains the lowest vacancy and the highest average effective rent.¹⁴

Within Birmingham, housing units are largely two- and three-bedroom units, collectively comprising 74.6 percent of Birmingham’s housing units in 2017, as seen in the table below, which breaks down housing units by the number of bedrooms. One-bedroom units and 4-bedroom units are the next most available housing type in Birmingham, which comprised 12.8 percent and 8 percent of units, respectively, in 2017. Studios or housing units without bedrooms and five- or more-bedroom units each comprised 3 percent or less of Birmingham’s housing. Since 2010, the availability of each type of housing unit in Birmingham has remained relatively consistent. Studio housing, however, saw the most significant increase since 2010, with 1,974 units added, more than doubling from 1.2 percent of housing units in 2010 to 3 percent in 2017. Five- or more-bedroom housing units also increased during this period, adding 423 units, going from 1.3 percent to 1.7 percent. This addition of more varied housing unit sizes in Birmingham will help to ensure adequate housing is provided for all of Birmingham’s household types.

Table 31: Total Number of Bedrooms, Birmingham, 2010 and 2017

	2010		2017	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total housing units	111,375	111,375	112,756	112,756
No bedroom	1,378	1.2%	3,352	3.0%
1 bedroom	15,670	14.1%	14,434	12.8%
2 bedrooms	38,995	35.0%	39,554	35.1%
3 bedrooms	44,055	39.6%	44,511	39.5%
4 bedrooms	9,795	8.8%	9,000	8.0%
5 or more bedrooms	1,482	1.3%	1,905	1.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

C. Housing Vacancy and Blight

Vacancy status is used as an indicator of a region’s housing market and provides information on the stability and neighborhood quality of life. Measuring vacancy provides insight into the demand for housing and housing turnover within areas, and it helps us to better understand the housing market over time.¹⁵

In 2017, 22,607 housing units in Birmingham, or 20 percent, were classified as vacant, up from 18.9 percent in 2010, as described in the table below.

¹⁴ Tostado, Alex, June 2019, Rebusiness Online “Central Birmingham’s Multifamily Development Pipeline set to expand significantly”. Available at: <https://rebusinessonline.com/central-birminghams-multifamily-development-pipeline-set-to-expand-significantly/>

¹⁵ American Community Survey and Puerto Rico Community Survey 2017 Subject Definitions.



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Table 32: Housing Occupancy, Birmingham, 2010-2017

	2010		2017	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total Units	111,375		112,756	(X)
Occupied Units	90,332	81.1%	90,149	80.0%
Vacant Units	21,043	18.9%	22,607	20.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The proportion of vacant housing units in Birmingham exceeds Jefferson County by 5.4 percent and that of Alabama by 3.2 percent. Within the region, Shelby County had the least vacant housing units, (9.6 percent). Overall, vacancy within the region is high. A healthy rental vacancy rate typically hovers around 7 to 8 percent, and a healthy homeowner vacancy rate pegged much lower at 2 percent or below. A vacancy rate of above 12 percent is considered high, and above 20 percent is considered hyper-vacancy.¹⁶ In the case of Birmingham, a 20 percent hyper-vacancy rate contributes to systemic issues that keep vacant units from re-entering the market and reducing the value of nearby properties.

Table 33: Housing Occupancy, 2017

	Birmingham		Jefferson County		Shelby County		Alabama	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total Units	112,756	(X)	306,110	(X)	85,043	(X)	2,231,126	(X)
Occupied Units	90,149	80.0%	261,390	85.4%	76,868	90.4%	1,856,695	83.2%
Vacant Units	22,607	20.0%	44,720	14.6%	8,175	9.6%	374,431	16.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Further investigation into the status of Birmingham’s approximately 22,600 vacant housing units reveal that 21.7 percent were available for rent, 4.3 percent were for sale, 8.7 percent were rented or sold but not occupied, 3.6 percent were for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, and 61.7 percent were classified as “other vacant” units.¹⁷ Vacant housing units are classified by the U.S. Census as “other vacant” when a vacant unit does not fall into any of the other specified categories. For example, this category includes units held for occupancy by a caretaker or janitor, and units held for personal reasons of the owner, foreclosed units, units in need of repair that aren’t in the process of being repaired, units caught in legal disputes, and abandoned units.¹⁸ “Other vacant” units are often indicators of community disinvestment and blight.

Within the region, “other vacant” properties were also significantly high, as seen in the table below. Other vacant housing comprised 55.4 percent in Jefferson County, 43.7 percent in Shelby County, and 45.9 percent statewide. In general, these properties comprised everything from properties or parcels owned by the Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport to former mining sites in the area. Vacant units available for rent were also higher than the national average regionwide and statewide, with rates

¹⁶ Florida, Richard, July 2018, City Lab Vacancy: America’s Other Housing Crisis. Retrieved from: <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2018/07/vacancy-americas-other-housing-crisis/565901/>

¹⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, [Housing Definitions and Explanations](#)



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similar to Birmingham. Vacancy is high across the state, region and city. Vacant units available for rent were 20 percent in Jefferson county, 19.6 percent in Shelby county, and 17.8 percent in Alabama.

Table 34: Vacancy Status, 2017

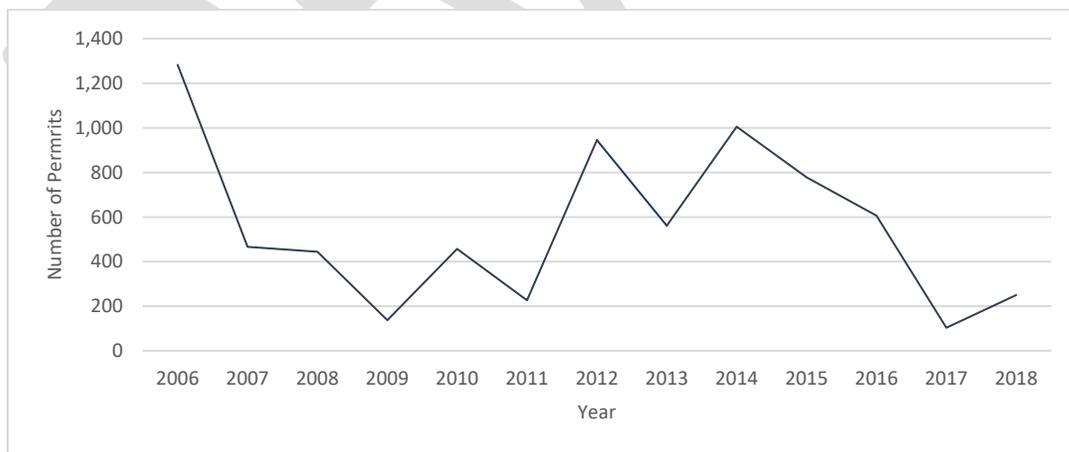
Vacancy Status	Birmingham		Jefferson County		Shelby County		Alabama	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total:	22,607		44,720		8,175		374,431	
For rent	4,907	21.7%	8,944	20.0%	1,599	19.6%	66,525	17.8%
Rented, not occupied	1,124	5.0%	2,602	5.8%	407	5.0%	13,172	3.5%
For sale only	980	4.3%	3,799	8.5%	1,095	13.4%	29,547	7.9%
Sold, not occupied	828	3.7%	2,243	5.0%	226	2.8%	13,788	3.7%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	823	3.6%	2,275	5.1%	1,275	15.6%	79,092	21.1%
For migrant workers	0	0.0%	82	0.2%	0	0.0%	383	0.1%
Other vacant	13,945	61.7%	24,775	55.4%	3,573	43.7%	171,924	45.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

D. Building Permits

The number of building permits issued annually provides a snapshot of housing demand in a city. Since 2006, housing construction in Birmingham has significantly slowed down, as illustrated in the figure below. During the height of the national housing crisis in 2009, just 137 permits were approved, which was 1,146 permits less than in 2006. Housing construction recovery has been fluctuating since, with several permit approvals in one year, followed by a significant reduction in approvals the following year, as seen in the figure below. Housing unit building permit approvals peaked in 2014 at 1,005 permit approvals but dipped in 2017 to just 103 permits. In 2018 permits rose to 250.

Figure 1: Total Housing Unit, Single-Family and Multifamily, Building Permits, Birmingham, 2006-2018



Source: State of the Cities Data Systems (SOCDS), Building Permits Database, 2006-2018

A significant proportion of Birmingham’s housing construction permits between 2006 and 2018 have been for multifamily housing, which differentiates the city from the state overall. In 2017, single-family detached housing units comprised 60.4 percent of housing in Birmingham. Since 2006, multifamily

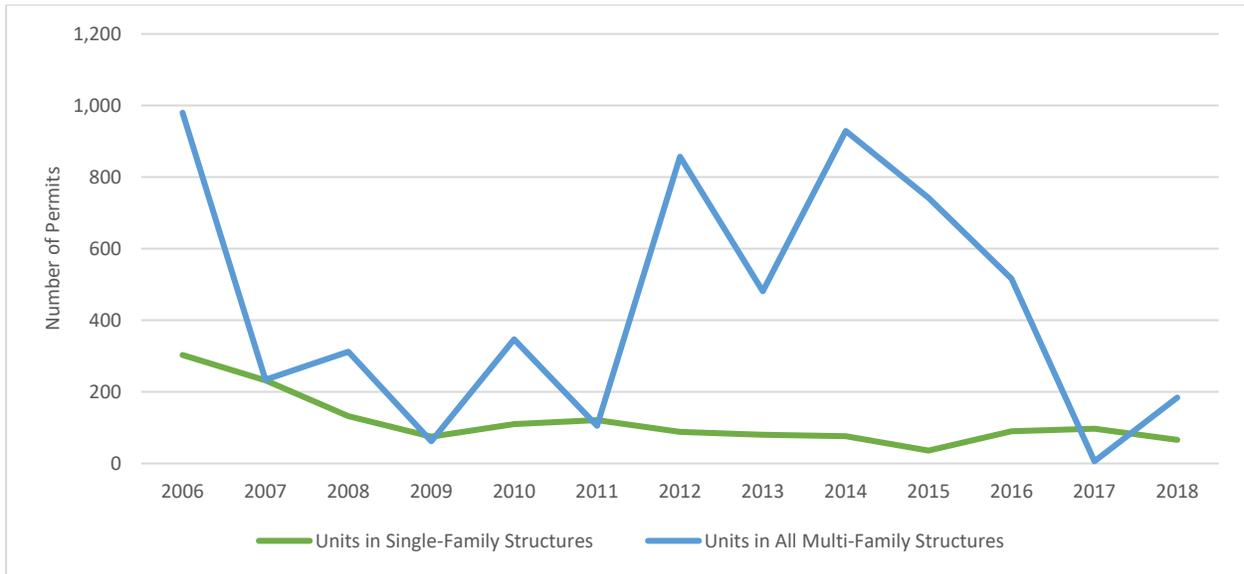


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housing permits made up 79.3 percent of all building permits, while single-family permits comprised just over 20 percent of permits. The jump in multifamily building permits demonstrates a market demand for more dense housing types than traditional single-family homes.

Figure 2: Total Single and Multifamily Building Permits, Birmingham, 2006-2018



Source: State of the Cities Data Systems (SOCDS), Building Permits Database, 2006-2018

Although multifamily housing has increased significantly, mostly five- or more-unit multifamily housing is being constructed. Multifamily housing with five or more units comprised 97 percent of all multifamily housing between 2006 and 2018, while 2 to 4-unit family structures, comprised just over 3 percent.

Table 35: Multifamily Housing Unit Building Permits, Birmingham, 2006-2018

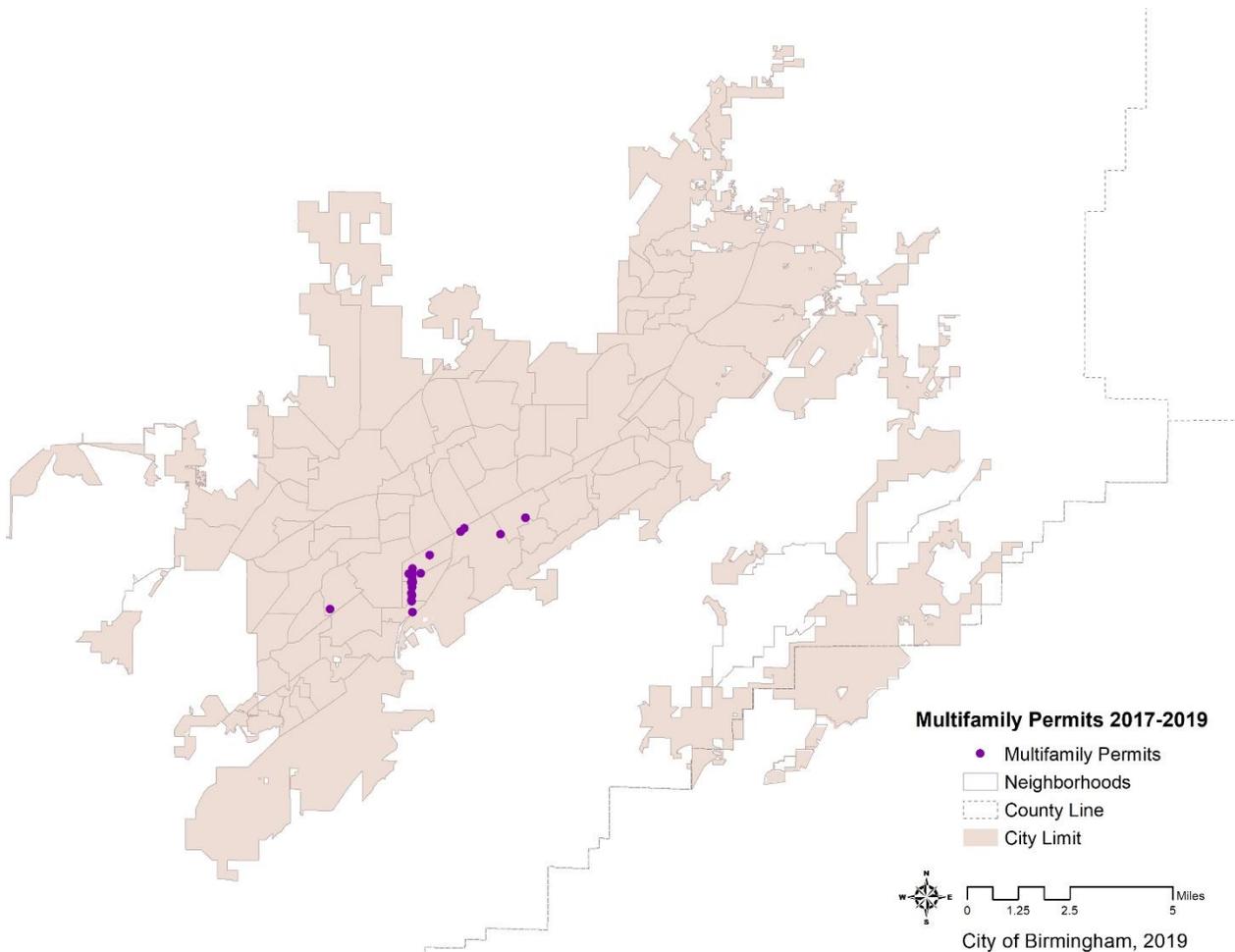
	2006-2018 Total Housing Unit Building Permits	Percent
Units in all Multifamily Structures	5,755	(X)
Units in 2-unit Multifamily Structures	42	0.7%
Units in 3- and 4-unit Multifamily Structures	142	2.5%
Units in 5+ Unit Multifamily Structures	5,571	96.8%

Source: State of the Cities Data Systems (SOCDS), Building Permits Database, 2006-2018

In addition to the concentration of certain types of multifamily structures, recent multifamily permits are largely concentrated near the historic neighborhood of Titusville, which is adjacent to the University of Alabama at Birmingham. According to figures provided by the Department of Community Development, since 2018, permits for 995 multifamily units have been issued.



Figure 3: Multifamily Permits, Birmingham, 2017-2019



Source: City of Birmingham, 2017-2019

E. Median Home Values

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median home value in Birmingham in 2017 was \$86,900, \$62,100 lower than the median home value in Jefferson County and \$45,200 higher than the statewide median home value.

From 2010 to 2017, Birmingham's median home values slightly increased 1.3 percent from \$85,800, while Jefferson County increased significantly at 7.7 percent, and the median housing value in Shelby County just increased 2.9 percent during this period. Statewide median housing value also rose significantly between 2010 and 2017 with an increase of 12.3 percent.



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Table 36: Median Home Value, 2010 and 2017

Jurisdiction	Year		Percent Change 2010-2017
	2010	2017	
Birmingham	\$85,800	\$86,900	1.3%
Jefferson County	\$138,300	\$149,000	7.7%
Shelby County	\$193,900	\$199,500	2.9%
Alabama	\$117,600	\$132,100	12.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Between 2009 and 2017, the median value of owner-occupied units in Birmingham has fluctuated but had an overall increase of \$400. Since 2013, Birmingham’s housing values have steadily increased, going from \$85,800 in 2013 to \$87,100 in 2011, however, median housing value dipped again in 2017 to \$86,900.

Figure 4: Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units, Birmingham, 2009-2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2005 – 2017 American Community Survey

F. Monthly Housing Cost

Monthly housing costs are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau to include monthly rent or mortgage payments, and utilities including water, sewer, and electricity.¹⁹ The table below describes the monthly housing costs for the owner and renter-occupied housing units Birmingham, Jefferson and Shelby counties and the state of Alabama.

In Birmingham, approximately 29 percent have monthly housing costs between \$1,000 and \$2,500, approximately double the median monthly housing cost of \$772. Birmingham’s percentage of persons with these housing costs is the lowest in the region. Monthly housing cost is also between \$1,000 and

¹⁹ Housing Cost and Housing Quality Fact Sheet, U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/housing/hsgcostfactsheet.html>



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\$2,500 for most residents in Jefferson (37.2 percent) and Shelby (49.1 percent) counties. Most residents statewide have monthly housing costs between \$500 and \$999 (35.4 percent).

Compared to the region and the state, Birmingham has the smallest proportion of persons who pay more than \$2,500 in monthly housing costs. In Birmingham, 1.3 percent of residents pay more than \$2,500 in monthly housing costs, compared to 4 percent in Jefferson County, 6.1 percent in Shelby county, and 2.2 percent statewide. Since Birmingham has the lowest proportion of persons who pay \$2,500 or more, this may reflect the inability of residents to pay higher rents or a smaller proportion of premium housing that demands higher rents.

Table 37: Monthly Housing Cost, 2017

	Birmingham		Jefferson County		Shelby County		Alabama	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Less than \$ 500	22,140	24.6%	56,077	21.5%	13,241	17.2%	556,231	30.0%
\$500 to \$999	31,647	35.1%	91,268	34.9%	20,171	26.2%	658,079	35.4%
\$1,000 to \$2,500	25,762	28.6%	97,216	37.2%	37,760	49.1%	537,001	28.9%
\$2,500 or more	1,135	1.3%	10,474	4.0%	4,670	6.1%	41,487	2.2%
Median Monthly Housing Cost	\$772	(X)	\$890	(X)	\$1,096	(X)	\$748	(X)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

1. Monthly Housing Cost as a Percentage of Household Income

Monthly housing costs as a percentage of household income provide information on the cost of monthly housing expenses for owners and renters. Persons who spend more than 30 percent of household income on housing costs are defined as cost-burdened. Housing costs include property taxes, insurance, energy payments, water, and sewer service, and refuse collection. If the homeowner has a mortgage, the determination also includes principal and interest payments on the mortgage loan. For renters, housing costs include monthly rent and selected electricity and natural gas energy charges. As the table below describes monthly housing cost as a percentage of household income in Birmingham.

The table below also shows that persons with lower incomes tend to spend a higher percentage of their income on housing. Based on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2017 Poverty Guidelines, the poverty level for a four-person household was \$24,600 in 2017.²⁰ In Birmingham, 28.2 percent of its population earns less than \$20,000 annually and more than one-fifth of those households (23.5 percent) spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing. This trend is less severe in Jefferson County and statewide. In Jefferson County, 18.5 percent of its residents earn less than \$20,000 annually and 15.4 percent spend more than 30 percent of their household income on housing. In Alabama, 18.7 percent earn below \$20,000 and 14.3 percent exceed 30 percent in housing costs. Shelby County had the lowest proportion of cost-burdened, low-income households. Less than one out of ten households (9.0 percent) earn less than \$20,000 and just 7.1 percent of these households are cost-burdened.

²⁰ [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2017 Poverty Guidelines](#)



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For Birmingham households earning \$50,000 or more annually, which is more than double the poverty threshold, 1.9 percent spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Similarly, throughout the region, higher-income households have fewer cost-burdened households, as seen in the table below. Households with income greater than or equal to \$50,000 that are cost-burdened make up 3.1 percent in Jefferson county, 4.3 percent in Shelby county, and 2.2 percent in Alabama.

Table 38: Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months, 2017

	Birmingham		Jefferson County		Shelby County		Alabama	
Less than \$20,000	25,402	28.2%	48,300	18.5%	6,927	9.0%	347,512	18.7%
30 percent or more	21,178	23.5%	40,282	15.4%	5,495	7.1%	264,654	14.3%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	16,951	18.8%	40,575	15.5%	8,595	11.2%	301,281	16.2%
30 percent or more	9,631	10.7%	22,854	8.7%	4,779	6.2%	132,858	7.2%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	12,597	14.0%	34,306	13.1%	8,340	10.8%	249,665	13.4%
30 percent or more	3,441	3.8%	9,802	3.7%	3,248	4.2%	54,746	2.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	13,921	15.4%	43,530	16.7%	13,604	17.7%	318,453	17.2%
30 percent or more	1,300	1.4%	5,359	2.1%	2,012	2.6%	29,132	1.6%
\$75,000 or more	16,558	18.4%	84,447	32.3%	37,743	49.1%	544,251	29.3%
30 percent or more	429	0.5%	2,669	1.0%	1,279	1.7%	11,793	0.6%
Zero or negative income	2,113	2.3%	3,877	1.5%	633	0.8%	31,636	1.7%
No cash rent	2,607	2.9%	6,355	2.4%	1,026	1.3%	63,897	3.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Overall, housing cost burden is also more prevalent in lower-income renter households than owner-occupied households. As seen in the following table, within households earning less than \$20,000 annually, 27 percent of renter households are cost-burdened, versus 8.4 percent of owner-occupied households in the same income bracket. Overall within Birmingham, the severity of housing costs is experienced significantly by higher income brackets; however, renter households remain more likely to pay a higher proportion of their income into housing than owner-occupied households.



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Table 39: Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months, Birmingham, 2017

	Occupied Households	Owner-Occupied Households	Renter-Occupied Households
Less than \$20,000	29.1%	13.3%	30.5%
30 percent or more	25.0%	8.4%	27.0%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	21.2%	14.7%	19.5%
30 percent or more	11.7%	5.1%	11.7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	15.8%	13.8%	12.7%
30 percent or more	4.1%	3.0%	2.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	15.4%	19.4%	12.2%
30 percent or more	1.7%	1.9%	0.8%
\$75,000 or more	14.3%	37.6%	11.3%
30 percent or more	0.3%	0.9%	0.1%
Zero or negative income	1.3%	1.2%	2.8%
No cash rent	2.8%	(X)	11.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

G. Housing Problems

The previous section examined housing cost and its impact on low-income households. In addition to cost burden, housing quality data goes beyond the number of housing units and looks at key factors for livability and health, safety, and welfare. The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) Rule Guidebook defines housing problems as:²¹

- Cost Burden: Monthly housing costs (including utilities) exceed 30 percent of household monthly income.
- Severe Cost Burden: Monthly housing costs (including utilities) exceed 50 percent of household monthly income.
- Overcrowding: Households have more than 1.01 to 1.5 persons per room, or
- Severe Overcrowding: Households have more than 1.51 persons per room.
- Substandard Housing: Households have one or more of the following substandard housing conditions:
 - i. Housing is without hot and cold piped water, a flush toilet and a bathtub or shower, and
 - ii. Housing with kitchen facilities that lack a sink with piped water, a range or stove, or a refrigerator.

In Birmingham, 43.9 percent of Birmingham households experience one or more housing problems described above. Of these households, Hispanic persons experience any one of the housing problems at the highest rate at 57 percent. Non-Hispanic Black or African American persons closely follow experiencing high rates of housing problems at 47.7 percent, which is also higher than the city average. Asian or Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic persons have the lowest rate of housing problems at 25.7 percent,

²¹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, December 2015, AFFH Rule Guidebook.



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18.2 percent lower than Birmingham’s average. Looking at Jefferson and Shelby counties and the state, Hispanic persons also experience any of the housing problems at the highest rates. Statewide, 43.5 percent of Hispanic persons experience any one of the housing problems, while 29.9 percent of persons in Alabama experience housing problems.

Table 40: Housing Problems, 2018

Percent of Households experiencing any of 4 housing problems	Percent White, Non-Hispanic	Percent Black, Non-Hispanic	Percent Hispanic	Percent Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	Percent Native American, Non-Hispanic	Percent Other, Non-Hispanic	Percent Total
Birmingham	32.9%	47.7%	57.0%	25.7%	42.0%	41.2%	43.9%
Jefferson County	25.5%	45.1%	46.6%	33.4%	41.3%	34.5%	34.3%
Shelby County	22.1%	35.9%	46.3%	46.3%	24.7%	20.4%	25.0%
Alabama	24.3%	43.8%	43.5%	32.9%	29.5%	38.9%	29.9%

Source: HUD Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Tables - data version AFFHT0004a, released February 2018

Housing problems show households with challenges related to cost and housing quality. However, HUD expands the definition to show households experiencing severe housing problems. This includes incomplete kitchen facilities; incomplete plumbing facilities; more than 1.5 people per room (as opposed to 1 person per room); and housing cost burden greater than 50 percent.

Overall, one-quarter of Birmingham households, or 25 percent, experience severe housing problems. Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic persons experience severe housing problems at the highest rate compared to other races in Birmingham, 28.1 percent, which is 3.1 percent higher than the city rate. Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic persons also experience severe housing problems at disproportionately higher rates throughout the state and region. As seen in the table below, in Jefferson and Shelby counties and the state of Alabama, the rate of Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic persons with severe housing problems exceeds the jurisdictional average with severe housing problems by at least 10 percentage points. In Shelby County, Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic persons had severe housing problems at a rate three times the rest of the county.

Non-Hispanic Black or African American populations also experience severe housing problems at a significantly high rate throughout the region. In Birmingham, 27.9 percent of its Black, Non-Hispanic population have severe housing problems. Other, Non-Hispanic persons also have high rates of severe housing problems at 26 percent.



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Table 41: Severe Housing Problems, 2018

Percent of Households experiencing any of 4 housing problems	Percent White, Non-Hispanic	Percent Black, Non-Hispanic	Percent Hispanic	Percent Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	Percent Native American, Non-Hispanic	Percent Other, Non-Hispanic	Percent Total
Birmingham	17.1%	27.9%	13.4%	28.1%	8.4%	26.0%	25.0%
Jefferson County	12.2%	25.2%	15.4%	28.8%	18.3%	17.4%	18.1%
Shelby County	9.5%	12.9%	18.2%	31.9%	8.7%	17.0%	10.9%
Alabama	11.6%	24.6%	17.4%	27.8%	16.8%	20.9%	15.4%

Source: HUD Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Tables - data version AFFHT0004a, released February 2018

At its core, the distribution of housing problems based on race reveals potential gaps in fair housing access and the opportunity for Birmingham and Alabama residents. Unaddressed, these housing problems harm the social and economic wellbeing of families and communities.

H. Disproportionate Housing Cost

An analysis of disproportionate housing costs assesses if any groups of persons, based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status, or disability, experience greater housing needs and costs when compared to other populations in Birmingham and the region.²²

The HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI) is the median income calculated by HUD for each jurisdiction to determine Fair Market Rents and income limits for HUD programs. Households earning 30, 50, and 80 percent of the median income qualify for HUD’s programs and represent the proportion of households in need of housing assistance.²³ Thirty percent, 50 percent, and 80 percent HAMFI are generally referred to as “extremely low-income,” “very-low-income and “low-income,” respectively. The tables in this section describe household income as a percentage of HAMFI.

In Birmingham, renter households comprise 75.5 percent of extremely low-income households or households earning less than or equal to 30 percent AMI, while owner-occupied households comprise just less than one quarter (24.5 percent) and 62.0 percent of very low-income households earning between 30 and 50 percent of HAMFI, while owner-occupied households comprise 38.0 percent. Households earning greater than 50 percent of HAMFI and considered low-income are 51.2 percent owner-occupied and 48.8 percent renter-occupied.

Homeownership in Birmingham is largely affordable to households not considered low-income. Households earning 80 to 100 percent of HAMFI are 51.4 percent owner-occupied and those earning above 100 percent of the HAMFI were 66 percent owner-occupied.

²² U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2015, AFFH Rule Guidebook. Page 82. Available at: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/AFFH-Rule-Guidebook.pdf>

²³ HUD Office of Policy and Research, CHAS Background Definitions. Available at: https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp/CHAS/bg_chas.html



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As the data show, households with higher incomes tend to own homes, while lower income households tend to rent. As more than half of Birmingham’s housing is renter-occupied (53.6 percent), this lack of homeownership could be indicative of a lack of affordable and moderately priced housing units for lower-income residents.

The percentage of homeowners in Birmingham is dissimilar to the rest of the region. Within Jefferson and Shelby counties, as well as the state of Alabama, owner-occupied households far exceed renter-occupied households. A further investigation into the challenges faced by Birmingham residents to homeownership is detailed later sections of this analysis.

Table 42: Income Distribution, Owner and Renter-Occupied Households, 2016

	Percent Household Income <= 30% HAMFI		Percent Household Income >30% to <=50% HAMFI		Percent Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI		Percent Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI		Percent Household Income >100% HAMFI		Percent Total	
	Owner	Renter	Owner	Renter	Owner	Renter	Owner	Renter	Owner	Renter	Owner	Renter
Birmingham	24.5%	75.5%	38.0%	62.0%	51.2%	48.8%	51.4%	48.6%	66.4%	33.6%	46.4%	53.6%
Jefferson County	33.1%	66.9%	48.6%	51.4%	58.5%	41.5%	62.9%	37.1%	80.7%	19.3%	63.0%	37.0%
Shelby County	57.6%	42.4%	64.1%	35.9%	67.5%	32.5%	75.6%	24.4%	87.4%	12.6%	79.3%	20.7%
Alabama	39.4%	60.6%	53.0%	47.0%	62.9%	37.1%	70.7%	29.3%	83.5%	16.5%	68.5%	31.5%

Source: HUD Office of Policy Development and Research, Consolidated Planning/ CHAS Data, 2012-2016

I. Cost Burden

As previously stated, households that pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost-burdened and households that pay more than 50 percent are considered severely cost-burdened. Cost-burdened households may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care.²⁴

Birmingham’s cost-burdened and severely cost-burdened owner-occupied households tend to be those classified as extremely low-income, very low-income and low-income. In Birmingham, 14 percent of owner-occupied households are extremely low-income. Of these households, 37 percent are cost-

²⁴ Department of Housing and Community Development, retrieved from: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/affordablehousing/



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burdened and 60 percent are severely cost-burdened. This rate of the cost burden for households indicates limited housing affordability for low-income households.

Table 43: Income by Cost Burden, Owner-Occupied Households, Birmingham, 2016

Income by Cost Burden (Owners only)	Cost burden > 30%	Cost burden > 50%	Total
Household Income <= 30% HAMFI	37.1%	59.9%	14.0%
Household Income >30% to <=50% HAMFI	26.2%	29.1%	13.7%
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI	23.7%	9.0%	20.7%
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI	6.1%	1.7%	10.0%
Household Income >100% HAMFI	6.8%	0.3%	41.6%
Total Owner-Occupied Households	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: HUD Office of Policy Development and Research, Consolidated Planning/ CHAS Data, 2012-2016

Similar to owner-occupied households, extremely low-income households are most severely impacted by cost burden. Of Birmingham’s renter-households, 37.3 percent are considered extremely low-income, 57 percent of which are cost-burdened, and 83.5 percent are severely cost-burdened. Very low-income and low-income households are also disproportionately cost-burdened, where collectively, 40 percent are cost-burdened and 21.9 percent are severely cost-burdened.

Table 44: Income by Cost Burden, Renter-occupied Households, Birmingham, 2016

Income by Cost Burden (Renters only)	Cost burden > 30%	Cost burden > 50%	Total
Household Income <= 30% HAMFI	57.0%	83.5%	37.3%
Household Income >30% to <=50% HAMFI	27.4%	14.9%	19.3%
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI	13.0%	1.7%	17.1%
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI	2.2%	0.0%	8.1%
Household Income >100% HAMFI	0.4%	0.0%	18.2%
Total Renter-Occupied Households	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: HUD Office of Policy Development and Research, Consolidated Planning/ CHAS Data, 2012-2016

J. Foreclosures

This section summarizes foreclosure policies and trends in the City of Birmingham. Reviewing these policies helps to better understand potential barriers to housing that result in foreclosures for Birmingham residents. Trends such as a high concentration of foreclosures in low-income communities, or policies that place protected classes under the Fair Housing Act, such as seniors or minorities at a disadvantage in resolving mortgage delinquencies reveal that these communities disproportionately face barriers to fair housing.

According to United States Foreclosure laws, in the state of Alabama, lenders may foreclose on deeds of trusts or mortgages in default using either judicial or non-judicial foreclosure process. The judicial process involves filing a lawsuit to obtain a court order to foreclose. This method is used when no “power of sale” is present in the mortgage or deed of trust. A “power of sale” clause in a deed of trust or mortgage pre-authorizes the sale of the property to pay off the balance on a loan in the event of default.



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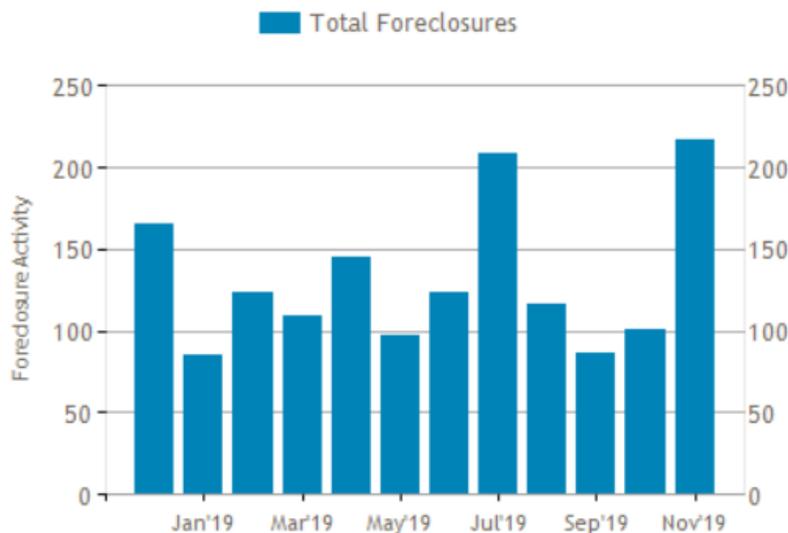
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However, when no power of sale is present, lenders may, at their discretion, choose to forego a lawsuit and foreclose by selling the property.

The non-judicial process of foreclosure is used when a power of sale clause exists in a mortgage or deed of trust. In deeds of trust or mortgages where a power of sale exists, the power given to the lender to sell the property may be executed by the lender or their representative.²⁵

Based on data retrieved from RealtyTrac, as of November 2019, there were 671 properties in Birmingham in some stage of foreclosure (default, auction, or bank-owned). In November 2019, the number of properties that received a foreclosure filing in Birmingham was 115 percent higher than the previous month and 95 percent higher than the same time last year.²⁶ The figure below shows the foreclosure rates in Birmingham between January and November 2019. Overall, 1 in every 943 housing units in Birmingham is foreclosed upon. Areas with the highest foreclosure activities include the area along the North West and North East areas of the city.

Figure 5: Foreclosure Activity for Birmingham



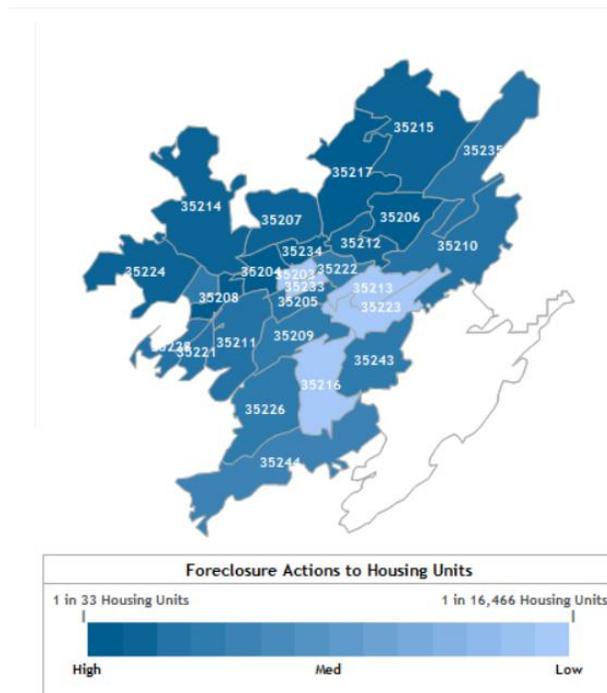
Source: Realtytrac.com

²⁵ United States Foreclosure Laws, Alabama Foreclosure Law Summary. Retrieved from: http://www.foreclosurelaw.org/Alabama_Foreclosure_Law.htm

²⁶ RealtyTrac, Birmingham Real Estate Statistics & Foreclosure Trends Summary. Retrieved from: <https://www.realtytrac.com/statsandtrends/al/jefferson-county/birmingham/>



Figure 6: Foreclosure Rates for Birmingham, November 2019



Source: Realtytrac.com, 2019

K. Displacement and Evictions

In Jefferson County and Birmingham, the eviction process is generally triggered by the tenant's failure to pay rent when due. If rent is not paid on time and the landlord wishes to evict the tenant, the landlord must deliver a proper written notice to terminate the lease to the tenant specifying the amount of rent and any late fees owed and that the rental agreement will terminate upon a date not less seven (7) days after receipt of the notice. If the landlord wishes to evict the tenant for a violation of the lease other than failure to pay rent, the written notice must specify the tenant's acts or omissions that violate the lease and that the rental agreement will terminate in no less than fourteen (14) days after the receipt of the notice.²⁷

In 2016, based on figures provided by the Eviction Lab, there were 47 evictions in Birmingham. This number amounts to 0.13 households evicted per day, or out of 100 renters occupied households, 0.1 were evicted for the year.²⁸ Birmingham's eviction rate is similarly low compared to Jefferson County and Alabama, whose eviction rates in 2016 were 0.42 percent and 1.82 percent respectively.

Birmingham's eviction rate reduced significantly since 2000. In 2000, there were 2,360 evictions, which reduced in 2010 to 630.²⁹ Although there is a low number of evictions, the rate at which evictions are

27 Kick'em out quick, Evictions and Collections. Available at: <https://www.kickemoutquick.com/>

28 The Eviction Lab at Princeton University. EvictionLab.org Eviction Rankings

29 The Eviction Lab at Princeton University EvictionLab.org



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filed remains high. In 2016, there were 3,164 eviction cases filed in Birmingham. This number also includes multiple cases filed against the same address in the same year. The number of cases filed in 2016 was 20 cases higher than the 3,144 cases that were filed in 2000.

Looking at Birmingham's renter population, just over one-third, or 34.1 percent are cost-burdened, 8 percent higher than in 2000 when 26.1 percent were cost-burdened. Renters are also disproportionately African American. African Americans comprised 72.3 percent of the renter population in 2016, while White renters comprised 22 percent, Hispanic renters, 3.5 percent, and Asian renters comprised 1 percent in 2016. While data isn't available to determine the race or ethnicity of evicted persons, based on the racial and ethnic composition of Birmingham's renter population, it would be a safe assumption that persons who are evicted would also disproportionately be African American.

The growing number of cost-burdened renter occupied households who would have one week to find alternative housing after being issued an eviction notice faces an extreme challenge, especially with already limited funds. A greater supply of affordable housing for renters could help prevent families from being pushed into homelessness or unstable housing following an eviction.

L. Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing

Naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) refers to rental homes that are affordable without public subsidy.³⁰ This existing housing is affordable for modest-income homeowners and renters and often found in urban and older suburban neighborhoods in danger of decline or gentrification. These neither high poverty nor affluent areas, often called middle neighborhoods, are the remnants of a vast number of one-time working-class and middle-class communities.³¹

NOAH's market rate affordability derives mainly from its age; most units were built 40 to 50 years ago and lack amenities: it is no-frills, functional housing that is nonetheless safe, secure, and inhabitable.³²

The availability of NOAH is beneficial to a community. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, the availability of these homes in quality neighborhoods provides an opportunity for household economic mobility and a competitive advantage for local jurisdictions. However, the Southeast, as in other areas of the country, has experienced a persistent affordable housing shortage since the Great Recession. This is due in part to historically low homeownership rates, rents that have increased at a

³⁰ National Low Income Housing Coalition. November 2016. "Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing Benefits Moderate Income Households, But Not the Poor." Available at: <https://nlihc.org/resource/naturally-occurring-affordable-housing-benefits-moderate-income-households-not-poor>

³¹ Brophy, Paul and Carey Shea. July 2019. Opinion: Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing is Hiding in Plain Sight. Shelterforce. The Voice of Community Development. Available at: <https://shelterforce.org/2019/07/22/opinion-naturally-occurring-affordable-housing-is-hiding-in-plain-sight/>

³² Pyati, Archana. October 2016. New CoStar Data Reveal a Vast National Inventory of Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing and an Untapped Opportunity. Urbanland. Available at: <https://urbanland.uli.org/economy-markets-trends/new-costar-data-reveal-vast-national-inventory-naturally-occurring-affordable-housing-untapped-opportunity/>



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faster rate than income, and the loss of subsidized and unsubsidized rental units due to abandonment and conversion.³³

This loss of affordable housing has the most significant impact on lower-income households. As previously discussed, of renter households in Birmingham considered extremely low-income (households earning 30 percent or less of the Area Median Income or AMI), 57 percent are cost-burdened and 84 percent are severely cost-burdened. Very low-income and low-income households (those earning between 50 and 80 percent of the AMI) also have significant rates of cost burden, where 40 percent experience cost burden and 22 percent are severely cost-burdened. These statistics indicate a strong need for housing that is affordable to households with incomes at these levels.

Based on data from the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's 2018 Rental Housing Affordability Report, Birmingham lacks affordable housing units. The analysis looks at the number of affordable units that are available at any point in time for 100 tenants. According to the analysis, Birmingham has 37 units affordable for extremely low-income households (households earning 30 percent or less of the AMI) and 81 affordable units for very low-income households (households earning between 31 and 50 percent of the AMI). There are 106 available units for low-income households (households earning between 50 and 80 percent of the AMI), thus highlighting a slight surplus for such households.³⁴ This report also analyzed the level of surplus or deficit of affordable housing by household income. The analysis found there is a shortage of approximately 11,600 units affordable for extremely low-income households and a shortage of 5,000 units affordable for very low-income households. This shortage shows that extremely low-income and low-income households will find it difficult to find housing units that are affordable to them based on income. On the other hand, the analysis found there is a surplus of approximately 2,000 units affordable for low-income households, or those at or below 80 percent AMI. There is more housing

³³ Carpenter, Ann, et al. July 2018. Rental Housing Affordability in the Southeast. The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's Community & Economic Development (CED) Discussion Paper Series. Available at: <https://www.frbatlanta.org/-/media/documents/community-development/publications/discussion-papers/2018/02-rental-housing-affordability-in-the-southeast-2018-07-19.pdf>

³⁴ Carpenter, Ann, et al. July 2018. Rental Housing Affordability in the Southeast. The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's Community & Economic Development (CED) Discussion Paper Series. Available at: <https://www.frbatlanta.org/-/media/documents/community-development/publications/discussion-papers/2018/02-rental-housing-affordability-in-the-southeast-2018-07-19.pdf>



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affordable available to households in this income bracket than most Birmingham residents can afford, as represented in the table below.

Table 45: Affordable and Available Units per 100 Tenants and Surplus or Deficit of Affordable and Available Units, Birmingham, 2018

	At or Below 30% AMI (Extremely Low-income)	At or Below 50% AMI (Very Low-income)	At or Below 80% AMI (Low-income)
Affordable and Available Units per 100 Tenants	37	81	106
Surplus or Deficit of Affordable and Available Units	-11,608	-5,084	2,131

Source: The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta’s Community & Economic Development (CED) Discussion Paper Series: Rental Housing Affordability in the Southeast: Data from the Sixth District

VI. Data on Populations with Special Needs

In addition to exploring the general housing and economic needs of the residents of Birmingham, the following sections explore the specific housing needs of residents with special needs, many of whom may have a harder time finding, securing, or maintaining housing. Understanding the needs of these subpopulations helps to determine whether any specific fair housing trends or patterns are disproportionately affecting these communities.

A. People Experiencing Homelessness

1. Definition of Homelessness

According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), homelessness can be classified in four ways: literally homeless, at imminent risk of homelessness, homeless under other Federal statutes, and fleeing/attempting to flee domestic violence (DV).³⁵ A brief description of each category is provided below.

1. **Literally Homeless:** Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
 - a. Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;
 - b. Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); or

³⁵ HUD Resource Library. January 2012. Criteria and Recordkeeping Requirements for Definition of Homelessness. Available at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/1974/criteria-and-recordkeeping-requirements-for-definition-of-homeless/>



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- c. Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution
2. **Imminent Risk of Homelessness:** Individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:
 - a. The residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
 - b. No subsequent residence has been identified; and
 - c. The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.
3. **Homeless under other Federal statutes:** Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:
 - a. Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes;
 - b. Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application;
 - c. Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during in the preceding 60 days; and
 - d. Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period due to special needs or barriers
4. **Fleeing/Attempting to Flee DV:** Any individual or family who:
 - a. Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence;
 - b. Has no other residence;
 - c. Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing; and
 - d. Dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening situations related to violence; have no other residence; and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

The Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program also follows the same definition of homelessness. The ESG program, however, can only serve Categories 1 and 4 of the definition provided above.³⁶

For example, ESG funds may be used for five program components: street outreach, emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, rapid re-housing assistance, and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), as well as administrative activities. To be eligible for ESG funding, beneficiaries must meet various definitions of homelessness depending on the service.

For essential services related to street outreach, beneficiaries must meet the following criteria according to paragraph (1)(i) of the homeless definition under 24 CFR 576.2: an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

³⁶ HUD Exchange, programs, ESG: Emergency Solutions Grant Program ESG Requirements. Retrieved from: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/esg/esg-requirements/>



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An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;

An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals); or

An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution;

For emergency shelter, beneficiaries must meet the following criteria, according to the homeless definition in 24 CFR 576.2: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/24/576.2>.

For essential services related to emergency shelter, beneficiaries must be homeless and staying in an emergency shelter (which could include a day shelter).

For homelessness prevention assistance, beneficiaries must meet the requirements described in 24 CFR 576.103: homelessness prevention assistance may be provided to individuals and families who meet the criteria under the “at risk of homelessness” definition, or who meet the criteria in paragraphs 2, 3, or 4 of the homeless definition in 24 CFR 576.2 and have an annual income below 30 percent of median family income for the area as determined by HUD.

At risk of homelessness means, an individual or family who:

- (i)** Has an annual income below 30 percent of median family income for the area, as determined by HUD;
- (ii)** Does not have sufficient resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or another place described in paragraph (1) of the “homeless” definition in this section; and
- (iii)** Meets one of the following conditions:
 - (A)** Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;
 - (B)** Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
 - (C)** Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance;
 - (D)** Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;
 - (E)** Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 persons reside per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau;



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(F) Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facilities, or correction program or institution); or

(G) Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness, as identified in the recipient's approved consolidated plan;

2. Continuum of Care (CoC) Program

The HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) program promotes communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; provides funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, and State and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness; promotes access to and utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimizes self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.³⁷

HUD requires CoCs to conduct a Point-in-Time (PIT) Count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. CoCs must conduct a count of people experiencing homelessness who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens annually; they must conduct a count of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness every other year. Though helpful in measuring changes in homelessness from year to year through a snapshot of homelessness on a single night, it is an imperfect method for gauging the size of the population of those who may experience homelessness throughout the year. Additionally, a shift in the methodology a CoC uses to count the homeless may cause a change in homeless counts between reporting periods.³⁸

The City of Birmingham is encompassed by a CoC that includes Jefferson, St. Clair, and Shelby Counties. Based on the most recent CoC PIT Count submitted to HUD, there were 854 homeless households counted on a given night in January 2019. Single adult couples without children were the largest proportion of homeless households, 96 percent of whom were unsheltered. The table below summarizes homeless households by type.

Table 46: Summary by Household Type Reported, 2019

	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total Homeless Households
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Safe Haven		
Households without children ¹	323	125	29	309	786
Households with at least one adult and one child ²	39	20	-	5	64
Households with only children ³	3	0	0	1	4
Total	365	145	29	315	854

¹ This category includes single adult couples with no children and groups of adults.

² This category includes households with one adult and at least one child under age 18.

³⁷ HUD Exchange Resources and assistance to support HUD's community partners. Retrieved from <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/>

³⁸ Birmingham/Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby Counties CoC 2018 Dashboard Report.



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³ This category includes persons under age 18, including children in one-child households, adolescent parents and their children, adolescent siblings, or other household configurations composed only of children.

Source: HUD 2018 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Homeless Populations and Subpopulations

According to the 2018 PIT Count, the population of people experiencing homelessness served by Birmingham’s regional CoC, both sheltered and unsheltered, was largely Black or African American. African Americans made up 64.5 percent of the homeless population, while White persons represented 32.5 percent. Hispanic or Latino persons comprised just 2.3 percent of the homeless population. The racial representations of Birmingham’s homeless population are proportional to its existing population. In 2017, Birmingham’s African American population was 71.6 percent, its White population was 24.6 percent and its Hispanic or Latino population was 3.5 percent. Understanding the demographics of the homeless population helps to specifically target programs, funding, and services to provide services effectively and to evaluate whether racial disparities exist in the provision of homeless services.

Table 47: Demographic Summary by Race and Ethnicity, 2019

	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total	Percent of Total
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Safe Haven			
Black or African-American	284	121	9	219	633	64.5%
White	150	60	19	90	319	32.5%
Asian	0	0	0	1	1	0.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	6	0	1	5	12	1.2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	1	0	1	3	0.3%
Multiple Races	3	0	0	10	13	1.3%
Total	444	182	29	326	981	(X)
Hispanic or Latino	11	5	0	7	23	2.3%
Non-Hispanic /Non-Latino	433	177	29	319	958	97.7%

¹ This category includes single adult couples with no children and groups of adults.

² This category includes households with one adult and at least one child under age 18.

³ This category includes persons under age 18, including children in one-child households, adolescent parents and their children, adolescent siblings, or other household configurations composed only of children.

Source: HUD 2018 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Homeless Populations and Subpopulations

In the 2019 PIT Count, the CoC counted 101 chronically homeless persons, most of whom (70 percent) were residing in emergency shelters. The table below provides a breakdown between the sheltered and unsheltered populations of people experiencing chronic homelessness.

Table 48: Summary of Chronically Homeless Households by Household Type Reported, 2019

	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Safe Haven		
Total Chronically Homeless Persons	70	-	13	18	101

Source: HUD 2019 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Homeless Populations and Subpopulations

All other sub-populations reported as homeless are described in the table below. Based on 2018 PIT count data, many homeless persons reported chronic substance abuse (35 percent) and severe mental illness (32 percent). Veterans and survivors of domestic violence also comprised significant proportions of the homeless population, representing 15 and 12 percent of the overall total. Understanding the



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underlying causes of homelessness can better help target programs, funding, and services to vulnerable populations.

Table 49: Summary of all other Populations Reported, 2018

Sub-Population	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Total	Percent
Severely Mentally Ill	124	141	265	32.0%
Chronic Substance Abuse	160	129	289	34.9%
Veterans	116	7	123	14.9%
HIV/AIDS	12	3	15	1.8%
Victims of Domestic Violence	45	55	100	12.1%
Unaccompanied Youth	21	5	26	3.1%
Parenting Youth	3	0	3	0.4%
Children of Parenting Youth	7	0	7	0.8%
Total	488	340	828	

Source: HUD 2018 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Homeless Populations and Subpopulations

3. LGBTQ+ Persons

Persons who identify as LGBTQ+ are protected under the Fair Housing Act based on sex, though the FHA does not specifically name sexual orientation as a protected class. HUD’s [Equal Access to Housing Final Rule](#) (2012) and the [Equal Access in Accordance with an Individual’s Gender Identity Final Rule](#) (2016) require equal access to HUD programs without regard to a person’s actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. In 2015, the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, which includes Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, Blount and Walker counties developed a needs assessment report entitled “Living LGBTQ in Central Alabama, Priorities for Action.” One of the report’s key findings was that homelessness, domestic, and public violence are reported by about one-quarter of respondents to the LGBTQ survey. Additionally, African American and trans-identified individuals are more likely to experience violence and homelessness.³⁹ Although LGBTQ+ populations are not reported in the table above, based on conversations with key community stakeholders, LGBTQ+ persons may face additional hurdles in accessing housing, such as being denied access to a gender-specific shelter.

To improve relations among the LGBTQ community, Birmingham’s mayor hired the city’s first LGBTQ liaison to serve as both a spokesperson for the city and as a representative of LGBTQ+ interests. This liaison will focus on the public safety of the LGBTQ+ community and build upon the relationship between the LGBTQ+ community and the city through the provision of fair and professional policies and services.⁴⁰

³⁹ Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, 2015, Living LGBTQ in Central America

⁴⁰ Edgemon, Erin, March 2019, Birmingham Real-Time News “Birmingham mayor names city’s first LGBTQ liaison” Retrieved from: https://www.al.com/news/birmingham/2018/06/birmingham_mayor_names_citys_f.html



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4. City of Birmingham Programs

The City of Birmingham provides several homelessness services, including homelessness prevention, housing rehabilitation, and rapid re-housing. According to the Homeless Shelter Directory, a free website that provides a directory of shelters that provide assistance to the homeless there are 25 shelters in or near Birmingham.⁴¹

B. Senior Population

The City of Birmingham has a relatively small senior population. As of 2017, persons 65 years and over represented 13.8 percent of its total population or 29,323 persons. Such proportion is slightly greater than in 2010 when this population comprised 12.5 percent of Birmingham residents. The proportion of persons 65 years and over in Birmingham was similar to the region, with persons 65 years and over comprising 14.6 percent in Jefferson County, 13.7 percent in Shelby County, and 15.7 percent statewide.⁴² Seniors, who often live on a fixed income, can sometimes have difficulty finding housing that is accessible and affordable, and which also allows them access to opportunity. As its senior population continues to grow, Birmingham will need to keep pace while ensuring that there is a sufficient supply of affordable and accessible housing units available for seniors.

1. Senior Population and Disability

Based on 2017 ACS data, a significant proportion of Birmingham’s senior population lives with a disability (43.3 percent). Most seniors living in Birmingham experience ambulatory difficulties, accounting for 33.5 percent of seniors with disabilities, while 19.5 percent face challenges living independently. As a result, persons who have trouble with mobility or who need assistance or in-home care, may also need specialized housing and/or services to meet their needs.

Table 50: Senior Population by Disability, Birmingham, 2017

	Total Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population	Percent of Population 65 and Over with a Disability
Total Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population	209,121	(X)
65 Years and Over	28,134	13.5%
With a Disability	12,193	43.3%
With a Hearing Difficulty	3,187	11.3%
With a Vision Difficulty	2,626	9.3%
With a Cognitive Difficulty	3,341	11.9%
With an Ambulatory Difficulty	9,427	33.5%
With a Self-Care Difficulty	3,766	13.4%
With an Independent Living Difficulty	5,500	19.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

2. Senior Population and Poverty

Senior residents face an enhanced challenge in being able to afford housing due to several factors, including limitations on a fixed income and the burden of out-of-pocket medical expenses. Based on

⁴¹ Homeless Shelter Directory <https://www.homelesshelterdirectory.org/cgi-bin/id/city.cgi?city=Birmingham&state=AL>

⁴² U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates



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2017 ACS data, 15.2 percent of Birmingham residents for whom poverty status was determined were over 65 years and living below the poverty level. The proportion of seniors living below the poverty level in Birmingham, however, has been on a downward trend, dropping from 18 percent in 2013 to 16.5 percent in 2015.

Currently, within the City of Birmingham, there are 16 low-income affordable housing communities for seniors.⁴³ To qualify to live in these communities, there are income and asset restrictions as well as additional eligibility criteria including credit history, eviction history, criminal background, registered sex offender status, and asset limits.

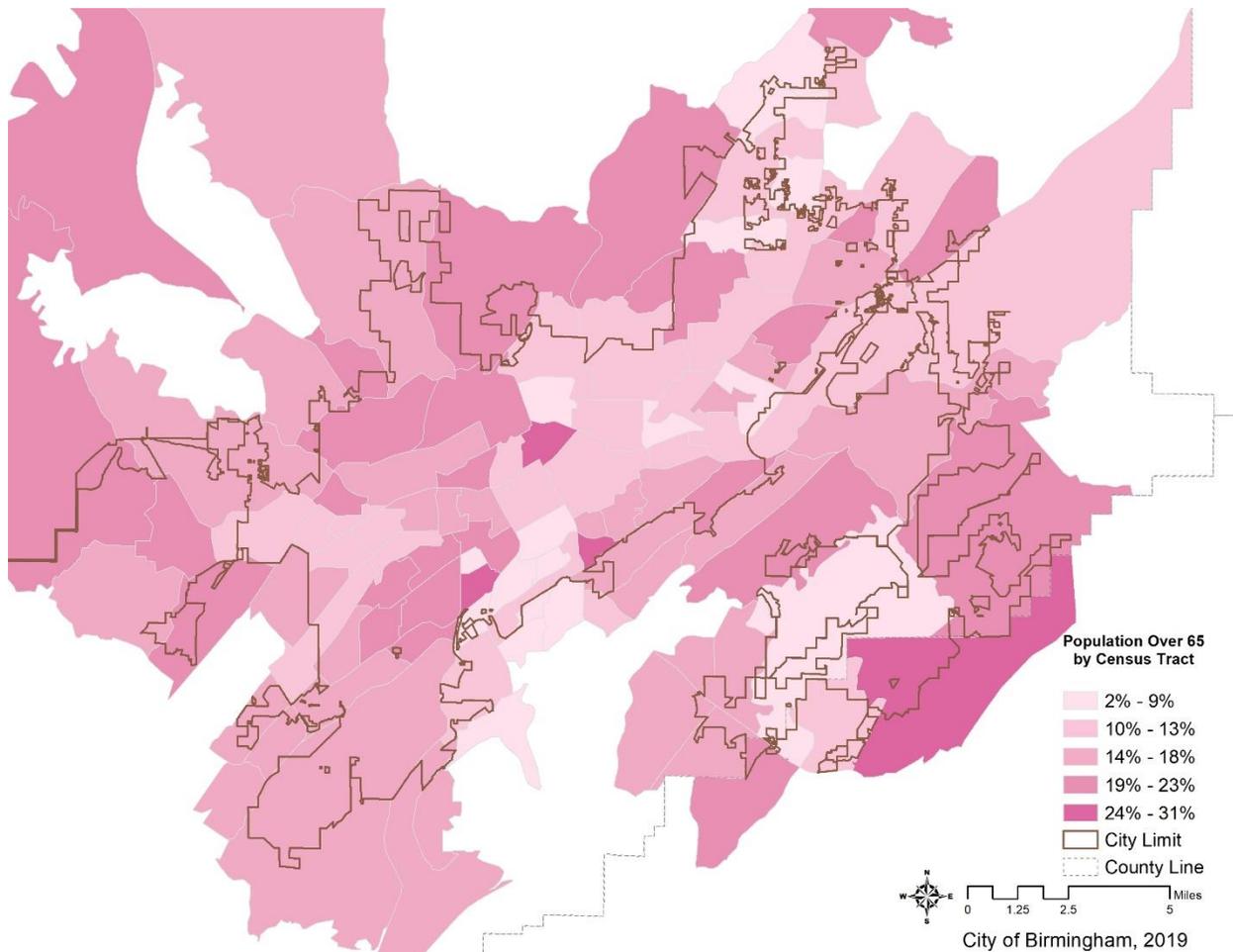
3. Location of Population 65 years and Over

Overall, based on ACS five-year estimates for 2013-2017, most of the population over age 65 years in Birmingham is located along the peripheries of the city. However, as the map below highlights, there are some noticeable exceptions located closer to Downtown Birmingham, such as Census Tracts 1600, 4800, 5103, and in the West End areas of the city. Such a wide distribution of the population over 65 underscores the ongoing challenges in providing supportive services for the population and in expanding access to housing opportunities to other areas of the city. Though various programs in Birmingham seek to specifically meet the needs of the senior population over age 65, the City will need to continue to evaluate the effectiveness of such programs and services, and to assess whether any potential barriers may keep senior residents from accessing or retaining housing opportunities.

⁴³ Seniorhousing.net



Figure 7: Population Over 65, Birmingham, 2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

C. Persons with Disabilities

Federal law classifies persons with disabilities as having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. As a result, persons with disabilities may need specific accessibility features or additional services in housing, transportation, education, and other programs or facilities to have equal opportunity.⁴⁴ This section takes a look at the demographic profile of persons with disabilities residing in the City of Birmingham and explores how and where persons with disabilities are geographically dispersed or concentrated. This analysis will help to identify if certain

⁴⁴ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, December 2015, AFFH-Rule Guidebook. Page 100



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populations living with disabilities experience segregation or unequal access to opportunity in Birmingham.

Based on ACS data, Birmingham’s civilian non-institutionalized population totaled 209,121 persons in 2017. Of this population, 37,541 persons over the age of 5 or 18 percent had a disability. Compared to the region, Birmingham had the highest concentration of persons living with disabilities. Regionally, persons with disabilities comprised 15.5 percent within Jefferson County, 11 percent in Shelby County, and 16.3 percent statewide. Birmingham is also among the country’s 100 largest metropolitan areas with the highest rates of disability among adults aged 25 to 54 years.⁴⁵

1. Disability by Race and Ethnicity

At the national level, Native Americans have the highest rate of disability among working-age adults, followed by African Americans, Whites, Hispanics, and Asians.⁴⁶ Looking at the disability statistics in the table below, Birmingham’s residents with disabilities follow similar trends to the rest of the country. Just over one-third, or 34 percent, of Birmingham’s American Indian and Alaska Native population has some disability, followed by 20 percent of Black or African Americans, 15 percent of White residents, 6 percent of Hispanic or Latino residents, and 4 percent of Asian residents.

Table 51: Disability by Race and Ethnicity Birmingham, 2017

	Total	Total with a Disability	Percent with a Disability
White alone	50,721	7,344	14.5%
Black or African American alone	150,302	29,497	19.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	389	131	33.7%
Asian alone	1,797	77	4.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	20	0	0.0%
Some other race alone	3,064	164	5.4%
Two or more races	2,828	328	11.6%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	47,013	7,103	15.1%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	7,285	432	5.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

⁴⁵ [Ross, Martha and Bateman, Nicole, May 2018, Brookings.edu: Disability rates among working-age adults are shaped by race, place, and education. Available at: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/05/15/disability-rates-among-working-age-adults-are-shaped-by-race-place-and-education/](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/05/15/disability-rates-among-working-age-adults-are-shaped-by-race-place-and-education/)

⁴⁶ [Ross, Martha and Bateman, Nicole, May 2018, Brookings.edu: Disability rates among working-age adults are shaped by race, place, and education. Available at: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/05/15/disability-rates-among-working-age-adults-are-shaped-by-race-place-and-education/](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/05/15/disability-rates-among-working-age-adults-are-shaped-by-race-place-and-education/)



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2. Disability by Type

The ACS captures six types of disabilities. A brief description of each disability type is provided below:

1. Hearing Difficulty: Deafness or serious difficulty hearing.
2. Vision Difficulty: Blindness or serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses.
3. Cognitive Difficulty: Serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions due to physical, mental, or emotional condition.
4. Ambulatory Difficulty: Serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs.
5. Self-care Difficulty: Difficulty dressing or bathing.
6. Independent Living: Difficulties doing errands alone, such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition.⁴⁷

Among Birmingham residents with a disability, ambulatory difficulties are most prevalent. Persons with ambulatory difficulties comprise 12 percent of Birmingham’s residents with disabilities, followed by 8 percent of persons with independent living difficulties, and 7 percent of persons with cognitive difficulties. The table below breaks down each disability by type.

Table 52 Disability by Type, Birmingham, 2017

	Total	With a Disability	Percent with a Disability
Total Civilian Non-institutionalized population	209,121	37,541	18.0%
With a Hearing Difficulty	(X)	6,184	3.0%
With a Vision Difficulty	(X)	7,749	3.7%
With a Cognitive Difficulty	(X)	13,859	7.1%
With an Ambulatory Difficulty	(X)	23,283	11.9%
With a self-care Difficulty	(X)	8,373	4.3%
With an independent Living Difficulty	(X)	13,155	7.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

3. Disability Concentrations

The dot density of persons with disabilities throughout Birmingham is shown in the figures below, which can be used to determine if persons with disabilities are limited to one geographic region. Based on the figures, there does not appear to be a concentration of persons with disabilities in any one region throughout Birmingham. Persons with disabilities have access to housing throughout the city.

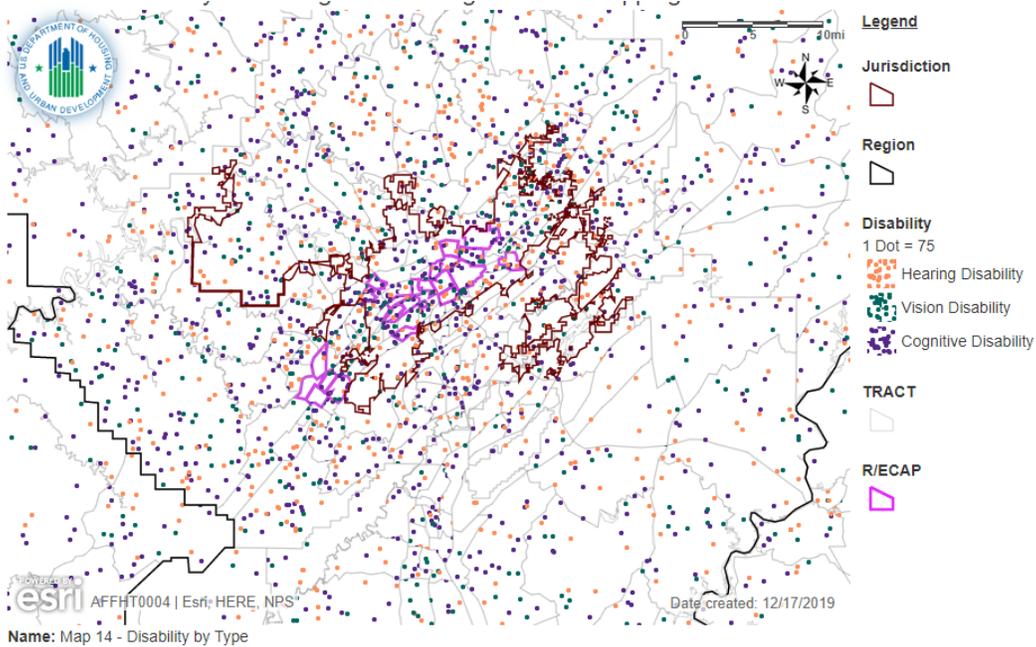
⁴⁷ [United States Census Bureau: How Disability Data are Collected from the American Community Survey. Available at: https://www.census.gov/topics/health/disability/guidance/data-collection-ac.html](https://www.census.gov/topics/health/disability/guidance/data-collection-ac.html)



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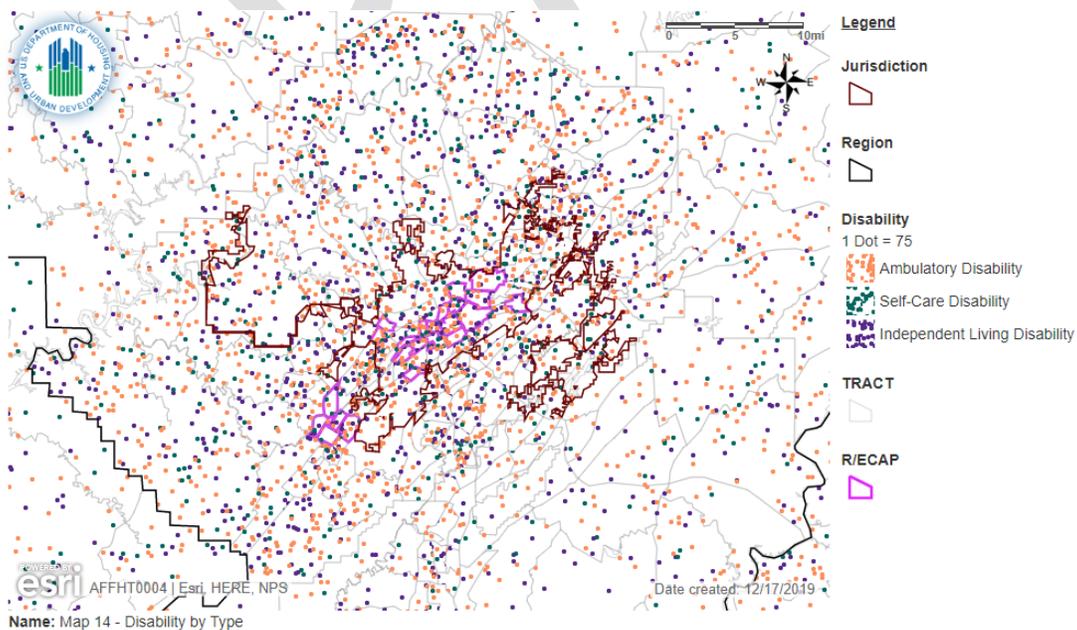
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Figure 8: Population of persons with disabilities by persons with hearing, vision, and cognitive disabilities with R/ECAPS, Birmingham, 2017



Source: HUD Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Data and Mapping Tool, AFFHT004

Figure 9: Population of persons with disabilities by persons with ambulatory, self-care, and independent living disabilities with R/ECAPS, Birmingham, 2017



Source: HUD Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Data and Mapping Tool, AFFHT0004



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4. Disability by Age

Senior residents in Birmingham, those 65 years and over, have significantly greater chances of having some physical or mental difficulty when compared to the rest of the population, as seen in the table below. In 2017, one-third or 33.5 percent of non-institutionalized persons over 65 years had an ambulatory difficulty, while just 12 percent of the total non-institutionalized population had ambulatory difficulties. Similarly, approximately 20 percent of seniors are unable to live alone, while 8 percent overall would have similar difficulties. This trend of seniors having higher percentages of disability follows for all captured difficulties, as shown in the table below.

As a result, since a significant proportion of persons who are disabled are also seniors, housing that is provided for seniors should also be adapted for seniors with disabilities and vice versa, where housing provided for persons with difficulties is also accommodating to senior populations.

Persons under 18 years have relatively low proportions of disabilities. The highest proportion of disabled persons in this age group have a cognitive disability (5.9 percent), followed by self-care disability (1.6 percent).

Table 53: Disability Type by Age, Birmingham, 2017

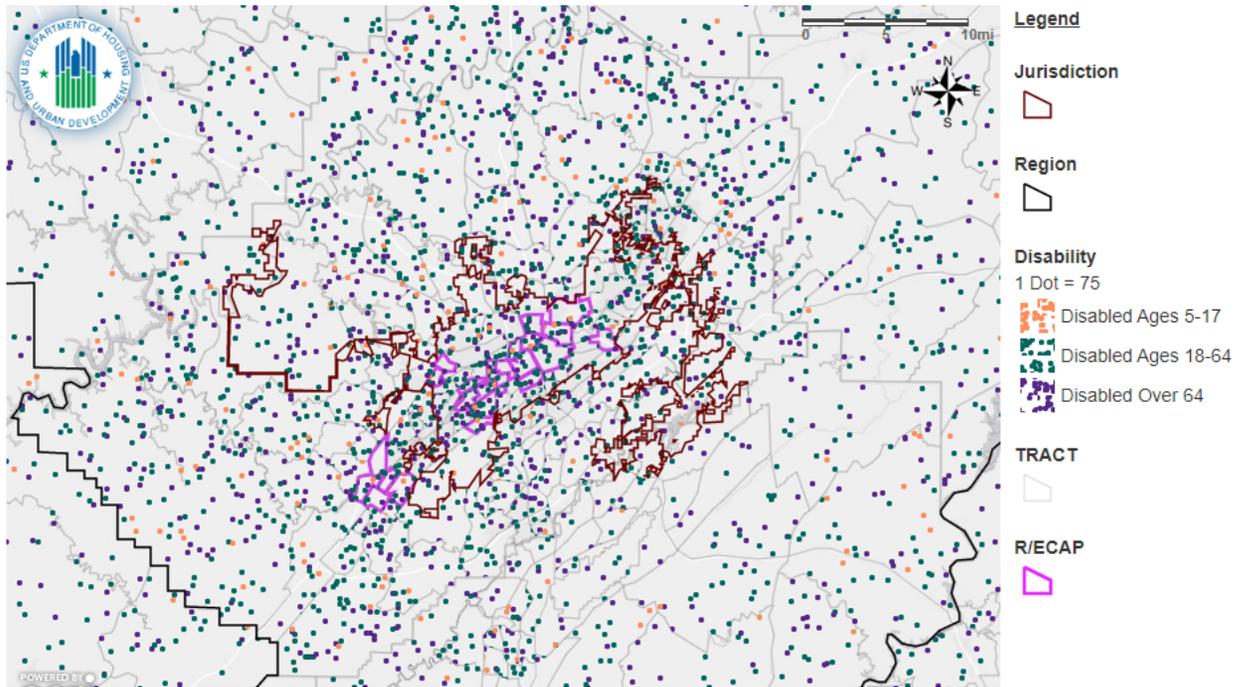
	Percent with a Difficulty					
	Hearing	Vision	Cognitive	Ambulatory	Self-Care	Independent Living
Total	3.0%	3.7%	7.1%	11.9%	4.3%	7.9%
Population under 18 Years	0.8%	1.3%	5.9%	1.2%	1.6%	(X)
Population 18 to 64 Years	1.9%	3.3%	6.4%	9.8%	3.0%	5.5%
Population 65 years and over	11.3%	9.3%	11.9%	33.5%	13.4%	19.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

The spatial locations of persons with disabilities by age group are shown in the figure below. From the illustration, persons over 64 years with a disability are spread throughout Birmingham. There doesn't seem to be a discernable spatial correlation or pattern with this population in Birmingham.



Figure 10: Disability by Age Group, Birmingham, 2017



Source: HUD Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Data and Mapping Tool, AFFHT0004

5. Disability and Poverty

There are several connections between persons with disabilities and poverty levels. According to the Brookings Institute, people with disabilities have much lower employment rates than people without disabilities.⁴⁸ This data helps to explain the rate of working-age adults, those between 18 and 64 years with a disability, whose income is below the poverty level (3.9 percent).

Housing choice for persons who are disabled and living below the poverty level could be a challenge due to the limited availability of housing which is both affordable and accessible. In some cases, community resistance to the construction of affordable housing for persons with disabilities in communities that have access to services and opportunities poses another challenge that may have the effect of limiting the supply of affordable and accessible housing.

⁴⁸ [Ross, Martha and Bateman, Nicole, May 2018, Brookings.edu: Disability rates among working-age adults are shaped by race, place, and education](#)



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Table 54: Age by Disability Status by Poverty Status, Birmingham, 2017

	Persons with a disability whose income in the past 12 months is below the poverty level	Persons with a disability whose income in the past 12 months is below the poverty level
	Estimate	Percent
Under 5 years:	0	0%
5 to 17 years:	1,361	0.7%
18 to 34 years:	2,126	1.0%
35 to 64 years:	5,908	2.9%
65 to 74 years:	1,599	0.8%
75 years and over:	1,057	0.5%
Total Civilian Population for whom poverty status is determined	205,149	(X)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 1 Year Estimates

D. Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program

HUD established the HOPWA program to provide housing assistance and related supportive services for low-income persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families. To be eligible for HOPWA, individuals must be medically diagnosed with HIV/AIDS and low-income, as defined by HUD (at or below 80 percent of AMI), and homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Services provided through HOPWA include:

- Short-term rent, mortgage, and utility assistance to prevent homelessness of the individual or family;
- Tenant-based rental assistance;
- Units provided in permanent housing facilities developed, leased, or operated with HOPWA funds; and
- Units provided in transitional, short-term housing facilities developed, leased, or operated with HOPWA funds.

In the City of Birmingham, HOPWA funds are administered through AIDS Alabama. AIDS Alabama offers several housing options for people living with HIV/AIDS and their families, as well as people who are homeless regardless of their HIV status.⁴⁹ Programs for individuals and families include:

- Rectory
- JASPER House
- Permanent Housing
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Rapid Rehousing
- Rental Assistance
- Rural Housing

⁴⁹ AIDS Alabama. Available at: <http://www.aidsalabama.org/what-can-we-do-for-you/housing/>



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- Shelter Plus Care

Based on the City of Birmingham's Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report, in 2018 AIDS Alabama assisted 515 households using HOPWA funds.⁵⁰ Additionally, in the 2018 Point-in-Time Count, 15 persons who had HIV/AIDS were counted as homeless; of these persons, 12 were sheltered and three were unsheltered.

E. Persons Protected Under the Violence Against Women Act

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was passed in 1994 and reauthorized in 2013. Subsequent guidance issued by HUD in 2016 established new housing protections for individuals participating in HUD-funded housing programs who are survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking (DV). HUD's [2016 Final Rule](#) extended core protections to CoC, ESG, and HOPWA programs.

VAWA housing protections include:

- Protection against housing denials, program terminations, and evictions that directly result from being a victim of DV.
- Acts of violence against someone cannot be considered to be serious or repeated violations of a lease or good cause for eviction or terminating federal assistance.
- Providing for Emergency Transfers to allow survivors to move to another safe and available unit if they fear for their life and safety.
- The housing authority, housing provider, or landlord may evict the abuser alone and let the victim and other household members remain in the home. If the federal housing assistance was based on the abuser's eligibility, then the victim and any remaining tenants have the right to prove eligibility for housing. If the victim cannot prove eligibility, they must be given a reasonable time to prove eligibility for another federal housing program or to find new housing.
- Victims with Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers are permitted to move and keep the voucher even if the lease has not ended.⁵¹

Based on the HUD 2018 PIT Count, there were a total of 45 sheltered and 55 unsheltered survivors of domestic violence experiencing homelessness within the CoC covering the City of Birmingham, Jefferson, St. Clair, and Shelby counties.

F. Public Housing Tenants

Public or supported housing includes conventional Public Housing, Project-based Section 8, Housing Choice Vouchers, and other supported multifamily housing. In 2018, the City of Birmingham had a total of 7,967 publicly supported housing units⁵² and Jefferson County had 18,656. The table below illustrates the number and type of public housing units in Jefferson County.

⁵⁰ City of Birmingham 2018 Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report

⁵¹ [National Housing Law Project, Housing Justice: Know Your Rights: Domestic Violence and Federally Assisted Housing](#)

⁵² Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Mapping Tool - Table 5, Version AFFHT0004, released 2017



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- Public housing includes affordable apartments for low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.
- Project-Based Section 8 housing provides rental housing to low-income households in privately owned and managed rental units. However, the subsidy stays with the building; when a tenant moves out, they no longer have the rental assistance.
- Other Multifamily housing includes a suite of housing programs, including those that serve persons with special needs, such as Section 202-Supportive Housing for the Elderly and Section 811-Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities.
- Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) allow participants to find housing of their choice and a housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the Public Housing Agency on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program.

In 2018, Jefferson County had 300,552 housing units, of which 18,656 or 6.2 percent were publicly assisted, as seen in the table below. The majority of housing assistance was through the HCV program, where approximately 8,000 or 2.7 of Jefferson County’s housing units received assistance, closely followed by public housing, where approximately 6,700 or 2.3 percent of housing units received assistance. Project-Based Section 8 and other multifamily housing assistance had the least participants, collectively assisting 3,806 housing units, comprising 1.3 percent of Jefferson County housing units.

Table 55: Publicly Supported Housing Units by Program Category, Jefferson County, 2018

Housing Program	Jefferson County	
	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	300,552	(X)
Public Housing	6,783	2.3%
Project Based Section 8	3,328	1.1%
Other Multifamily	478	0.2%
Housing Choice Voucher (HCV)	8,067	2.7%
Total Assisted Housing Units	18,656	6.2%

Source: AFFH Raw Data Version AFFHT0004a February 2018

The following table examines the demographics of persons who participate in publicly assisted housing programs. In Jefferson County, Black or African American persons disproportionately participate in federal housing assistance programs, representing 91.2 percent of assisted households. However, Black or African American persons comprise less than half of 42.6 percent of Jefferson County’s population. Meanwhile, White populations comprise 52.1 percent of Jefferson County’s total population and just 7.3 percent of publicly assisted households. Hispanic or Latino households represent 1.4 percent and Asian or Pacific Islanders represent just 0.1 percent of publicly assisted households.



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Table 56: Publicly Supported Households by Race/Ethnicity, Jefferson County, Alabama

Jefferson County	White		Black or African American		Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Pacific Islander		Total Population in Public Housing
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Housing Category									
Public Housing	213	3.4%	5,957	95.0%	98	1.6%	0	0.0%	6,268
Project-Based Section 8	569	17.9%	2,581	81.3%	20	0.6%	3	0.1%	3,173
Other Multifamily	185	42.5%	247	56.8%	1	0.2%	1	0.2%	434
HCV Program	312	4.1%	7,117	94.2%	118	1.6%	5	0.1%	7,552
Total	1,279	7.3%	15,902	91.2%	237	1.4%	9	0.1%	17,427

Source: AFFH Raw Data Version AFFHT0004a February 2018

Based on HUD’s Assisted Housing database, assisted housing units in Birmingham were 89 percent occupied in 2018, with an average of 2.2 persons per unit. The average annual household income was \$11,627. Forty-seven percent of assisted households had just one adult and one child and 17 percent of assisted households had a disability.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program (LIHTC)

The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program (LIHTC) is a source for creating affordable housing. The LIHTC program issues tax credits for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of rental housing targeted to lower-income households. Since 1988, about 55 LIHTC projects have been developed in the City of Birmingham, totaling 4,528 housing units and 4,409 low-income housing units. The breakdown of unit types is as follows: two-bedroom units comprise 47.7 percent of the total units built; one-bedroom units comprise 24.2 percent; three-bedroom units comprise 16.9 percent; four-bedroom units comprise 0.5 percent; and efficiency units comprise 0.1 percent of the total units built.⁵³

G. Veterans and Wounded Warriors

Based on the 2013-2017 ACS, there were 12,859 veterans living in Birmingham in 2017, which comprised 7.6 percent of the overall population age 18 years and over. On a single night in January 2018, there were 133 homeless veterans (116 unsheltered and 17 sheltered) in the Birmingham/Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby Counties Continuum of Care. Between 2016 and 2017, veteran homelessness increased by 0.1 percent. As the table below illustrates, veterans in Birmingham are generally Non-Hispanic Black or African American males without a disability.

⁵³ HUD LIHTC Database Access: <https://lihtc.huduser.gov/>



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Table 57: Demographics of Birmingham Veterans, 2017

	Birmingham City, Alabama		Veterans		Nonveterans	
	Total	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Population 18 years and Over	169,164	(X)	12,859	7.6%	156,305	92.4%
Male	78,391	46.3%	11,647	90.6%	66,744	42.7%
Female	90,773	53.7%	1,212	9.4%	89,561	57.3%
White alone	46,840	27.7%	3,419	26.6%	43,421	27.8%
Black or African American alone	116,617	68.9%	9,280	72.2%	107,337	68.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	349	0.2%	79	0.6%	270	0.2%
Asian alone	1,736	1.0%	0	0.0%	1,736	1.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	20	0.0%	0	0.0%	20	0.0%
Some other race alone	2,062	1.2%	45	0.3%	2,017	1.3%
Two or more races	1,540	0.9%	36	0.3%	1,504	1.0%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	5,098	3.0%	56	0.4%	5,042	3.2%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	44,085	26.1%	3,414	26.5%	40,671	26.0%
Civilian Population for whom Poverty status is determined	162,878	(X)	12,657	(X)	150,221	(X)
With a disability	34,827	21.4%	4,183	33.0%	30,644	20.4%
Without a disability	128,051	78.6%	8,474	67.0%	119,577	79.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

H. Immigrants

Under the federal Fair Housing Act, discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings and in other housing-related transactions based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and disability is illegal regardless of the victim’s immigration status. Additionally, different treatment in housing because of a person’s ancestry, ethnicity, birthplace, culture, or language based on national origin is illegal. Persons cannot be denied housing opportunities because they or their family are from another country, because they have a name or accent associated with a national origin group, because they participate in certain customs associated with a national origin group, or because they are married to or associate with people of a certain national origin.⁵⁴

Jefferson County has a foreign-born population from a wide range of national origins. The top ten places of birth for Jefferson County’s foreign-born residents include South America, Europe, Asia, and Canada. Most foreign-born residents originate from Mexico, approximately 11,000 persons, followed by persons from India and China, each totaling approximately 2,000 persons.

⁵⁴ [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Immigration Status and Housing Discrimination Frequently Asked Questions.](#)



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Table 58: Top Countries of Birth in Jefferson County

	Country	Number	Percent of Population
Count of top 1 place of birth	Mexico	10,972	1.8%
Count of top 2 place of birth	Guatemala	959	0.2%
Count of top 3 place of birth	India	2,151	0.4%
Count of top 4 place of birth	Korea	379	0.1%
Count of top 5 place of birth	China excl. Hong Kong & Taiwan	1,967	0.3%
Count of top 6 place of birth	Germany	403	0.1%
Count of top 7 place of birth	Vietnam	565	0.1%
Count of top 8 place of birth	Philippines	529	0.1%
Count of top 9 place of birth	Canada	572	0.1%
Count of top 10 place of birth	Honduras	271	0.0%

Source: AFFH Raw Data Version AFFHT0004a February 2018

Within Jefferson county's Racially and Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty (R/ECAPs), persons born in Mexico also comprise the largest proportion of foreign-born persons, at a total of 460 persons. Persons from China are the second-largest foreign-born group living within R/ECAP areas in Birmingham at 134 persons.

Table 59: Top Countries of Birth for R/ECAPs in Jefferson County

		Number	Percent
The total population in R/ECAPS		62,373	(X)
Count of top 1 place of birth	Mexico	460	0.7%
Count of top 2 place of birth	Guatemala	85	0.1%
Count of top 3 place of birth	Honduras	38	0.1%
Count of top 4 place of birth	China excl. Hong Kong & Taiwan	134	0.2%
Count of top 5 place of birth	Korea	27	0.0%
Count of top 6 place of birth	Germany	86	0.1%
Count of top 7 place of birth	India	90	0.1%
Count of top 8 place of birth	Jamaica	11	0.0%
Count of top 9 place of birth	Nigeria	31	0.1%
Count of top 10 place of birth	Haiti	0	0.0%

Source: AFFH Raw Data Version AFFHT0004a February 2018



VII. Segregation & Integration

The history of housing segregation in Birmingham is marked by implicit and explicit forms of social and spatial discrimination including redlining, segregation, and disparities in lending. The result of these practices around the country was the enactment of the Fair Housing Act in 1968, which was designed to address inequality in mortgage lending and homeownership and curb explicit discriminatory practices by landlords who avoided renting to minorities. Since the enactment of the FHA, progress has been made, but patterns of segregation and housing discrimination remain major impediments to social and economic mobility for Birmingham residents, specially protected classes.⁵⁵ This chapter explores segregation and integration patterns in Birmingham using federal and local data to understand segregation and its impact on Birmingham residents.

A. Racially and Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty (R/ECAP)

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines Racially and Ethnically Concentrated Areas of poverty (R/ECAPs) with a racial/ethnic concentration threshold and a poverty test of a census tract. A R/ECAP area is a census tract that has a non-white population of 50 percent or more and where 40 percent or more of individuals live at or below the poverty line. To reflect regional and neighborhood differences across the county, an area is also considered a R/ECAP if the poverty rate exceeds 40 percent or is three or more times the average census tract poverty rate for the area, whichever is lower.⁵⁶

1. Location of R/ECAPS

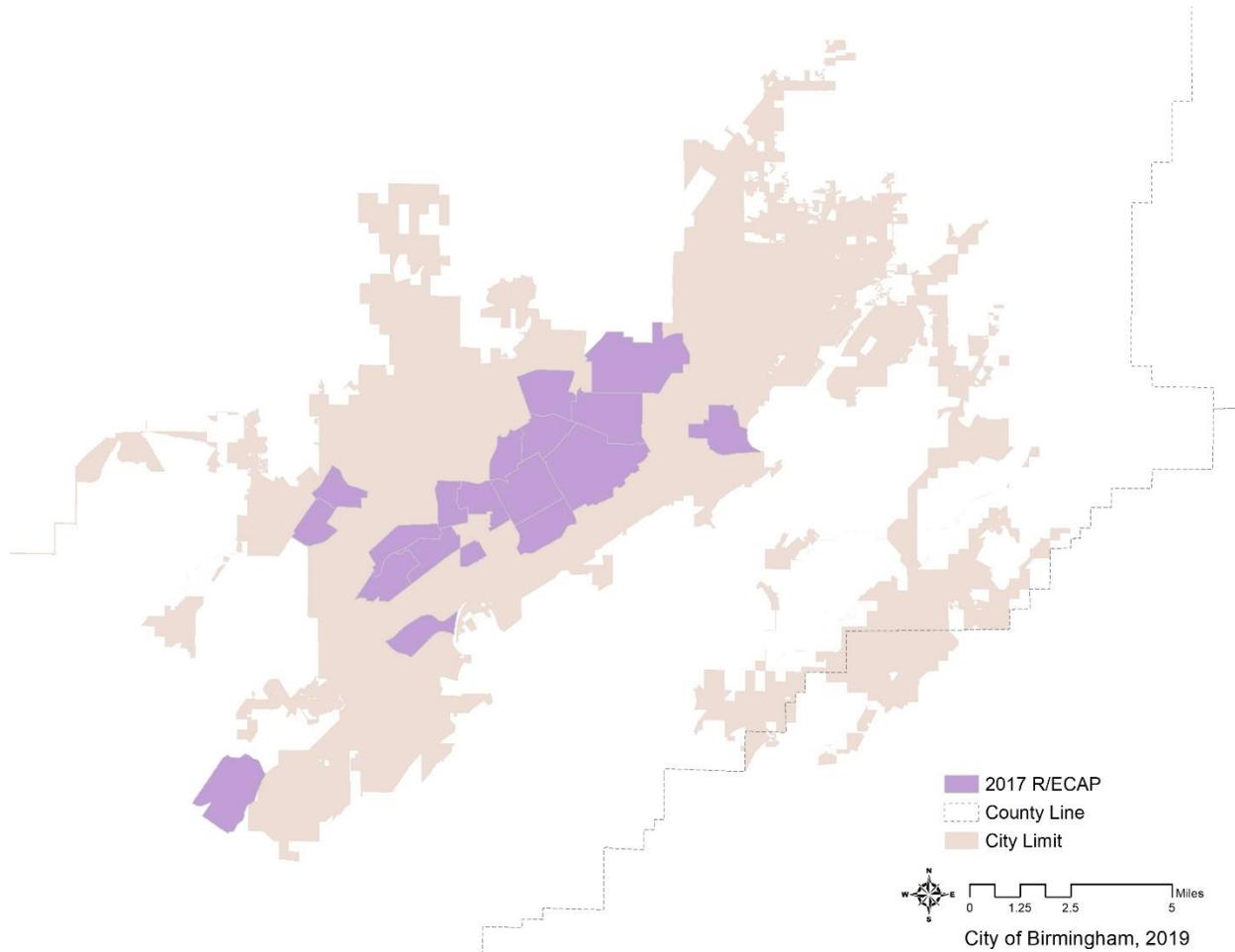
In 2017 there were 19 R/ECAP areas in Birmingham, which increased 36 percent since 2010 when there were 14 R/ECAP areas. An increase in R/ECAP areas represents more concentrated areas of poverty and fewer opportunities for communities of color living below the poverty threshold. The location of R/ECAP areas in Birmingham are shown in the figure below.

⁵⁵ "Segregation's Legacy," U.S. News, 2018. Available at: <https://www.usnews.com/news/the-report/articles/2018-04-20/us-is-still-segregated-even-after-fair-housing-act>

⁵⁶ Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2018. Available at: https://hudgis-hud.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/56de4edea8264fe5a344da9811ef5d6e_0



Figure 11: 2017 R/ECAPs, Birmingham, 2017



Source: HUD: AFFH Mapping Tool, 2017

2. R/ECAP Demographics

Based on data released by HUD in 2017, 51,384 persons lived in R/ECAP areas in Birmingham. As shown in the table below, R/ECAP areas primarily comprise of Black, Non-Hispanic persons who represent 84.3 percent of the population. The next largest populations in R/ECAP areas include White, Non-Hispanic residents who comprise 11.4 percent and Hispanic residents, who comprise 2.5 percent. All other racial groups each comprise less than 1 percent of residents in R/ECAP areas. Approximately 11,000 families reside within R/ECAP areas and 41 percent of them are families with children.



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Table 60: R/ECAP Demographics, Birmingham, 2017

R/ECAP Race/Ethnicity	Estimate	Percent
Total Population in R/ECAPs	51,384	(X)
White, Non-Hispanic	5,844	11.4
Black, Non-Hispanic	43,332	84.3
Hispanic	1,292	2.5
Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	388	0.8
Native American, Non-Hispanic	102	0.2
Other, Non-Hispanic	35	0.1
R/ECAP Family Type		
Total Families in R/ECAPs	10,900	(X)
Families with children	4,426	40.6

Source: AFFH Raw Data Version AFFHT0004a February 2018

A majority of the population in the City of Birmingham’s R/ECAP areas are born in the United States, with few residents whose national origin is outside the United States. Out of the total R/ECAP population, 821 persons or 1.6 percent have an origin outside of the U.S. Persons originating from Mexico, however, had the highest proportion of persons whose origin was outside the U.S with 266 persons.

Table 61: Country of Origin for persons in R/ECAP Areas

	Country of Origin	Estimate	Percent
Total Population in R/ECAPs		51,384	(X)
#1 country of origin	Mexico	266	0.5%
#2 country of origin	China excl. Hong Kong & Taiwan	134	0.3%
#3 country of origin	India	90	0.2%
#4 country of origin	Germany	86	0.2%
#5 country of origin	Guatemala	74	0.1%
#6 country of origin	Yemen	43	0.1%
#7 country of origin	Honduras	38	0.1%
#8 country of origin	Nigeria	31	0.1%
#9 country of origin	Egypt	30	0.1%
#10 country of origin	El Salvador	29	0.1%

Source: AFFH Raw Data Version AFFHT0004a February 2018

B. Segregation Levels

The Dissimilarity Index measures the level of segregation or integration within a city or community. A dissimilarity index represents a summary measure of the extent to which the distribution of any two groups (frequently racial or ethnic groups) differs across census tracts or block groups. A dissimilarity index of 1 reflects complete segregation, where each tract has exclusively one of the two groups. A dissimilarity index less than 40 percent represents low segregation, 41 – 54 percent represents moderate segregation, and an index 55 percent or greater represents high segregation.



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The 2010 dissimilarity indices show high segregation in Birmingham between White and all non-White racial and ethnic groups. Segregation between White and Black populations is highest when compared to other racial and ethnic groups but has declined 4.3 percent between 1990 and 2000. White and Hispanic persons are moderately segregated in Birmingham, while Asian or Pacific Islander persons are the only group where there is low segregation with White persons.

Table 62: Racial/Ethnic Dissimilarity Index

Racial/Ethnic Dissimilarity Index	1990	2000	2010
Non-White/White	65.3	60.6	59.5
Black/White	66.1	62.1	61.8
Hispanic/White	33.2	62.1	53.2
Asian or Pacific Islander/White	50.8	46.6	37.6

Source: AFFH Raw Data Version AFFHT0004a February 2018

Segregation leads to disproportionate access to opportunity and quality of life issues relating to schools, job opportunities, park access, housing, or crime. In 2017, the Birmingham-Hoover metropolitan area was found to be in the top ten most segregated cities in America.⁵⁷

1. Historic Segregation

Government-backed segregation practices continue to impact housing markets across the United States, leading to disparity in access to capital for protected classes across the City of Birmingham’s neighborhoods. Eighty years ago, a federal agency, the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC), created “Residential Security” maps of major American cities. These maps document how loan officers, appraisers, and real estate professionals evaluated mortgage lending risk during the era immediately before the surge of suburbanization in the 1950s. Neighborhoods considered high risk or “Hazardous” were often “redlined” by lending institutions, denying them access to capital investment which could improve the housing and economic opportunity of residents. The figure below shows the HOLC “Residential Security” map of the City of Birmingham with a color-coded gradation of neighborhoods by risk level.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ [Gore, Leada, July 2017, Al.com News “1 Alabama city among 16 most segregated in America”](#)

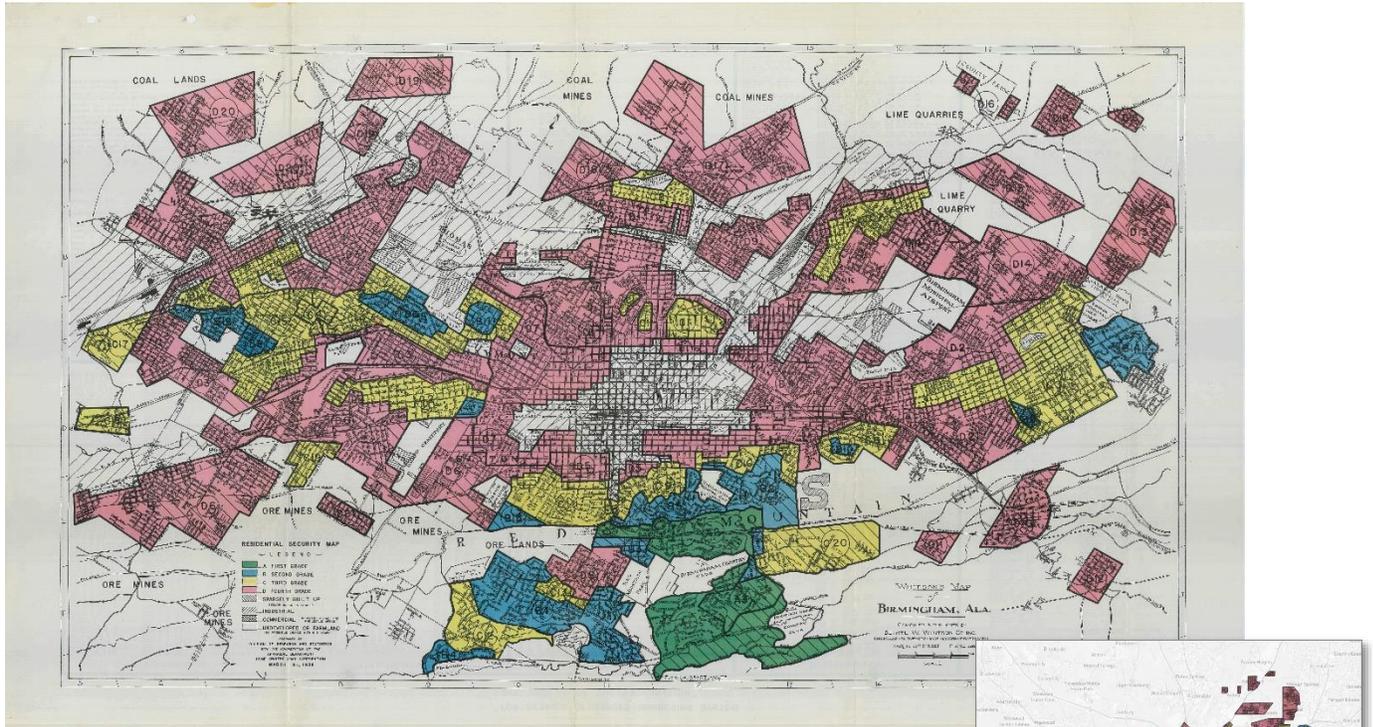
⁵⁸ Mitchell, Bruce PhD, Juan Franco. 2018. HOLC “Redlining” Maps: The persistent structure of segregation and economic inequality. National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC). Available at: https://ncrc.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2018/02/NCRC-Research-HOLC-10.pdf



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Figure 12: HOLC Redlining Map, Birmingham, 1938



Source: "Mapping Inequality," University of Richmond, 2000

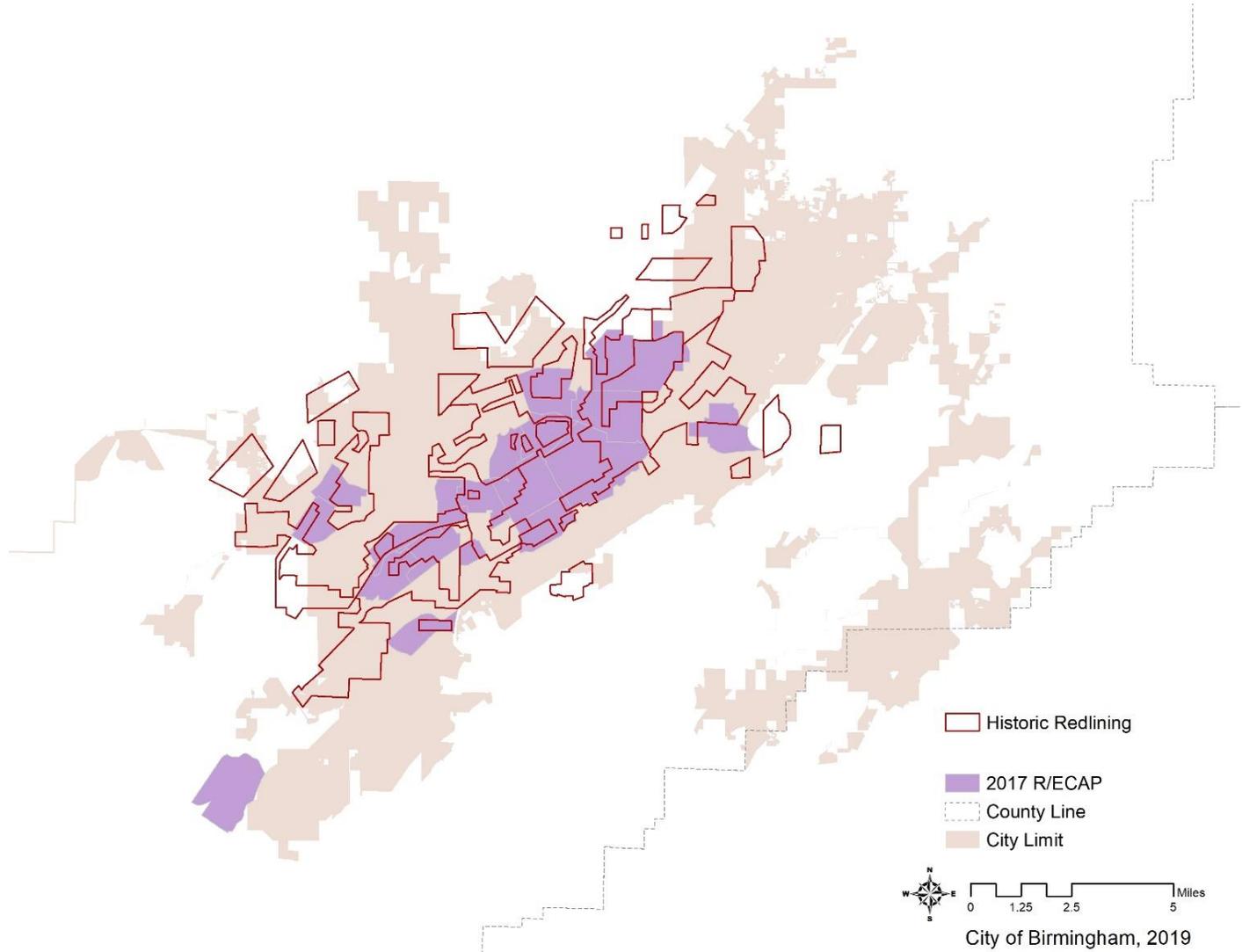
The Federal Housing Administration continued discriminatory practices, reinforcing residential segregation in cities such as Birmingham. The discriminatory practices captured by the HOLC maps continued until 1968 when the Fair Housing Act banned racial discrimination in housing. The figure below shows how historic redlining lines up with HUD's measure of R/ECAP areas, showing that patterns of economic and racial residential segregation are still evident today. Understanding these historical and current segregation patterns is key to understanding fair housing choice and inform impediments and actions outlined in this document.



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Figure 13: Historic Redlining and R/ECAPs, Birmingham, 2017



Source: "Mapping Inequality," University of Richmond, 2000; HUD, 2019



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C. Families with Children

Understanding opportunities for family households, particularly households with children is central to understanding neighborhood access across the City of Birmingham. In 2017, more than half of Birmingham’s total households were family households (52.4 percent) and 20.2 percent were families with children.

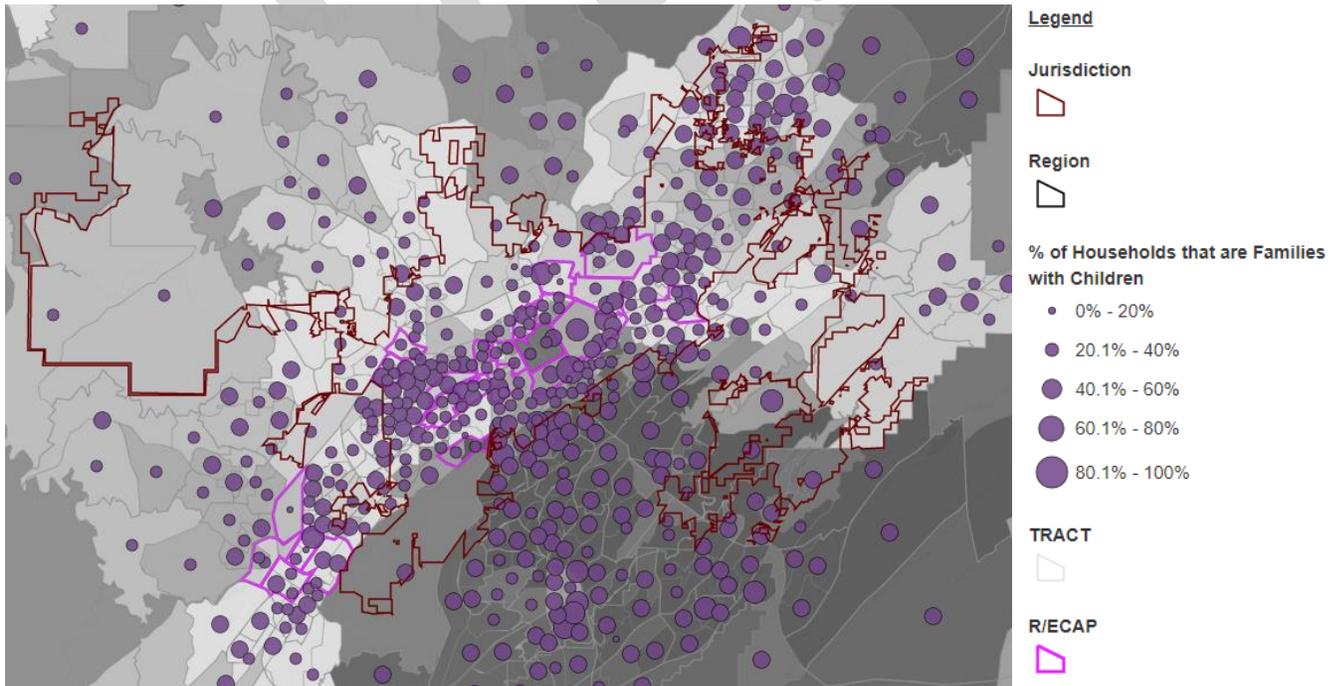
Table 63: Families with Children, Birmingham 2017

	Birmingham City, Alabama	
	Estimate	Percent
Households by Type		
Total households	90,149	90,149
Family households (families)	47,262	52.4%
With own children of the householder under 18 years	18,227	20.2%
Married-couple family	21,884	24.3%
With own children of the householder under 18 years	6,079	6.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The distribution of family households with children is shown in the figure below. The west side of the city features higher percentages of households with children and more R/ECAP areas. Comparatively, the northeast side of the city also has a higher percentage of households with children but have fewer R/ECAP areas. R/ECAP areas are a measure for access to opportunity, which is covered further in the next section of the document.

Figure 14: Percent of Households that are Families with Children



Source: HUD Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Data and Mapping Tool, AFFHT0004



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D. Limited English Proficiency Population

HUD defines Limited English Proficiency (LEP) as a person’s limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. Persons who are LEP, however, are not a protected class under the Fair Housing Act. Nonetheless, the Act prohibits housing providers from selectively using language access as a pretext for discrimination. The Act also prohibits housing providers from using LEP in a way that causes an unjustified discriminatory effect.⁵⁹

On 1.4 percent of the City of Birmingham’s households are considered LEP. Of this population, the majority speak Spanish (31.4 percent) and Other Indo-European languages (22 percent).

Table 64: Limited English Proficiency, Birmingham, 2017

	Total	Limited English-speaking households	Percent limited English-speaking households
All households	90,149	1,251	1.4%
Households speaking --			
Spanish	2,807	880	31.4%
Other Indo-European languages	1,092	240	22.0%
Asian and Pacific Island languages	728	88	12.1%
Other languages	559	43	7.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

⁵⁹ [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, September 2016, Office of General Counsel Guidance on Fair Housing Act Protections for Persons with Limited English Proficiency](#)



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VIII. Access to Opportunity

Access to opportunity measures poverty, local conditions, access to jobs, education, healthy and safe living conditions, public services and amenities, which are critical factors to consider when measuring fair housing choice. This chapter provides an overview of federal and local data sources and stakeholder and community feedback to examine access to opportunity for Birmingham's protected classes. This chapter will discuss access to education, affordable transportation, employment opportunities, environmental health, housing quality, exposure to lead-based paint, and broadband access. Measuring these opportunity factors provides insight into communities' quality of life and informs fair housing needs for protected classes.

A. Overview of HUD-Defined Opportunity Factors

HUD developed opportunity indicators to identify communities with disparate access to opportunity and identify protected classes experiencing disparate impacts of unfair housing choice. The opportunity index includes scores for: poverty, education, employment, transportation and environmental health. The following sections provide definitions of each opportunity indicator as defined in HUD's AFFH-T Data Documentation and describe local findings. Values for each range from 0 to 100 with 0 representing a low score and less access to opportunity and 100 representing a high score and more access to opportunity.⁶⁰

1. Low Poverty Index

The Low Poverty Index measures poverty in a community, a higher score represents a more prosperous community with lower levels of poverty. This indicator measures rates of family poverty and the receipt of public assistance, such as cash welfare.⁶¹ The table below shows Poverty Index scores across race and ethnicity. In this table, we see that in general, the Native American Non-Hispanic community and the Black Non-Hispanic Community are the least prosperous and experience the most poverty, while the White Non-Hispanic and Asian or Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic Communities are the most prosperous and experience the least poverty.

⁶⁰ Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Data and Mapping Tool (AFFH-T) Data Documentation, 2017. Available at: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/AFFH-T-Data-Documentation-AFFHT0001-September-2017.pdf>

⁶¹ Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Data and Mapping Tool (AFFH-T) Data Documentation, Data Version AFFHT0002, "Indices", 2017. Available at: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/AFFH-T-Data-Documentation-AFFHT0002-September-2017.pdf>



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Table 65: Low Poverty Index by Race/Ethnicity, Birmingham, 2017

Total Population	White, Non-Hispanic	Black, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	Native American, Non-Hispanic
Low Poverty Index	41.7	18.5	23.8	37.9	13.0
Population below the federal poverty line					
Low Poverty Index	29.4	12.9	21.4	20.9	13.0

Source: HUD 2016 AFFH data

2. School Proficiency Index

The School Proficiency Index measures the quality of the school systems in a community. The higher the score, the higher the school system met HUD’s definition of proficiency. This indicator uses school-level data on the performance of 4th-grade students on state exams to describe which neighborhoods have high-performing elementary schools nearby and which are near lower-performing elementary schools.⁶² The table below shows School Proficiency Index scores across race and ethnicity. In this table, we see that the Asian or Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic and White Non-Hispanic and Hispanic Communities have the most access to quality schools even when in poverty, While the Native American Non-Hispanic and Black Non-Hispanic communities have the least access to quality schools.

Table 66: School Proficiency Index by Race/Ethnicity, Birmingham, 2017

Total Population	White, Non-Hispanic	Black, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	Native American, Non-Hispanic
School Proficiency Index	38.8	19.7	33.0	48.3	28.9
Population below the federal poverty line					
School Proficiency Index	30.5	17.6	31.3	44.3	12.7

Source: HUD 2016 AFFH data

3. Labor Market Engagement Index

The Labor Market Engagement Index measures a community’s level of employment, labor force participation, and educational attainment in a community, the higher the score, the higher the opportunity for engagement in the labor market. The table below shows the Labor Market Engagement Index scores across race and ethnicity.⁶³ In the table below, Asian or Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic and White Non-Hispanic and Hispanic communities have the most labor market engagement even when in

⁶² Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Data and Mapping Tool (AFFH-T) Data Documentation, Data Version AFFHT0002, “Indices”, 2017. Available at: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/AFFH-T-Data-Documentation-AFFHT0002-September-2017.pdf>

⁶³ Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Data and Mapping Tool (AFFH-T) Data Documentation, Data Version AFFHT0002, “Indices”, 2017. Available at: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/AFFH-T-Data-Documentation-AFFHT0002-September-2017.pdf>



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poverty, While the Native American Non-Hispanic and Black Non-Hispanic communities have the least Labor market engagement.

Table 67: School Proficiency Index by Race/Ethnicity, Birmingham, 2017

Total Population	White, Non-Hispanic	Black, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	Native American, Non-Hispanic
Labor Market Engagement Index	57.2	20.3	38.3	57.7	31.5
Population below the federal poverty line					
Labor Market Engagement Index	40.7	13.9	35.3	42.3	14.3

Source: HUD 2016 AFFH data

4. Transit Index

The Transit Index measures the utilization of public transportation in a community. Transit access describes the accessibility of amenities using public transit. The higher the score, the more likely residents in that community utilize public transit. This indicator estimates transit trips taken by families that: are a 3-person single-parent family with income at 50 percent of the median income for renters for the region (i.e., the Core-Based Statistical Area (CBSA)).⁶⁴ The table below shows the Transit Index scores across race and ethnicity. Based on these parameters, transit use is consistent across racial and ethnic communities with the Asian Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic community below the poverty with the highest score.

Table 68: Transit Index by Race/Ethnicity, Birmingham, 2017

Total Population	White, Non-Hispanic	Black, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	Native American, Non-Hispanic
Transit Index	35.0	32.8	39.2	38.9	33.7
Population below the federal poverty line					
Transit Index	36.5	34.4	36.5	47.4	33.8

Source: HUD 2016 AFFH data

⁶⁴ Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Data and Mapping Tool (AFFH-T) Data Documentation, Data Version AFFHT0002, "Indices", 2017. Available at: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/AFFH-T-Data-Documentation-AFFHT0002-September-2017.pdf>



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5. Low Transportation Cost Index

The Low Transportation Cost Index estimates transportation costs for families that: are a 3-person single-parent family with income at 50% of the median income for renters for the region (i.e., CBSA).⁶⁵ The table below shows the Low Transportation Cost Index scores across race and ethnicity. In this table, we see that the Asian or Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic community has the lowest transit costs followed by the Hispanic and the White Non-Hispanic communities.

Table 69: Low Transportation Cost Index by Race/Ethnicity, Birmingham, 2017

Total Population	White, Non-Hispanic	Black, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	Native American, Non-Hispanic
Low Transportation Cost Index	56.3	52.4	61.4	64.6	56.2
Population below the federal poverty line					
Low Transportation Cost Index	59.1	54.8	58.1	71.8	52.2

Source: HUD 2016 AFFH data

6. Jobs Proximity Index

The Jobs Proximity Index measures the distance of job locations from a community. Greater weight is given to larger employment centers. The competition for a job location measured by labor supply is inversely weighted.⁶⁶ The table below shows Jobs Proximity Index scores across race and ethnicity. In this table, we see that the Asian or Pacific Islander community lives closest to where they work, followed by the Hispanic and White Non-Hispanic communities.

⁶⁵ Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Data and Mapping Tool (AFFH-T) Data Documentation, Data Version AFFHT0002, "Indices", 2017. Available at: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/AFFH-T-Data-Documentation-AFFHT0002-September-2017.pdf>

⁶⁶ Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Data and Mapping Tool (AFFH-T) Data Documentation, Data Version AFFHT0002, "Indices", 2017. Available at: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/AFFH-T-Data-Documentation-AFFHT0002-September-2017.pdf>



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Table 70: Jobs Proximity Index by Race/Ethnicity, Birmingham, 2017

Total Population	White, Non-Hispanic	Black, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	Native American, Non-Hispanic
Jobs Proximity Index	59.2	43.2	59.1	69.0	51.9
Population below the federal poverty line					
Jobs Proximity Index	52.2	46.7	57.5	60.0	43.9

Source: HUD 2016 AFFH data

7. Environmental Health Index

The environmental health index measures the environmental quality of a community. The higher the score, the less exposure a community has to harmful environmental toxins. The index measures the potential for exposure to harmful toxins within a community, as determined by the Environmental Protection Agency’s Toxic Release Inventory by volume and toxicity.⁶⁷ The table below shows Environmental Health Index scores for Birmingham communities, across race, ethnicity, and poverty. In this table, we see that the Hispanic community has the greatest exposure to environmental toxins. For communities below the federal poverty level, the Native American, Non-Hispanic community below the poverty line has the least exposure to environmental toxins, while the Asian Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic community below the poverty line has the most risk of exposure to environmental toxins.

Table 71: Environmental Health Index by Race/Ethnicity, Birmingham, 2017

Total Population	White, Non-Hispanic	Black, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	Native American, Non-Hispanic
Environmental Health Index	9.2	8.3	6.7	7.6	8.3
Population below the federal poverty line					
Environmental Health Index	7.8	7.2	6.9	3.3	11.3

Source: HUD 2016 AFFH data

Looking at the indices overall, White, Non-Hispanic population tends to live in more prosperous communities, have access to higher-quality schools, and have the most labor market engagement. Native American Non-Hispanic community and the Black Non-Hispanic community are the least prosperous, have the least access to quality schools, and the lowest labor market engagement. The Asian Pacific Islander population has the highest transit access score, have the lowest transportation costs, live closest to their jobs, but are most at risk of exposure to environmental toxins. Hispanic

⁶⁷ Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Data and Mapping Tool (AFFH-T) Data Documentation, Data Version AFFHT0002, "Indices", 2017. Available at: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/AFFH-T-Data-Documentation-AFFHT0002-September-2017.pdf>



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communities tend to live close to where they work and have low transit and transportation costs and are at high risk of environmental toxin exposure.

Understanding the disproportionality of opportunity access within White, Non-Hispanic communities compared to minority communities will help inform the location of housing that is accessible to minority communities, to ensure they are also given access to housing within higher opportunity neighborhoods.

B. Local Opportunity Factors

In addition to the Access to Opportunity Indices provided by HUD. Data provided by the ACS and HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) provides insight into the conditions of Communities and Housing. The following analysis examines employment, education, broadband access, transportation, environmental justice, and disproportionate housing.

1. Unemployment

Household income is a determining factor of where people can afford to live and the quality of housing conditions they can afford to have. Quality jobs provide access to sufficient household income and improve housing choice.

The tables below show employment status over time and by gender and race/ethnicity. Employment status is assessed for the population over 16 years and over. Persons in the age group of 16 to 64 years who are seeking employment or currently working are considered to be participating in the labor force. An individual who is not actively seeking a job is not considered to be participating in the labor force and thus is not part of the unemployment calculation.

Birmingham's unemployment rate decreased from 12.9 percent in 2010 to 10.7 percent in 2017. However, labor force participation also decreased from 61.4 percent in 2010 to 60.2 percent in 2017. The employed population increased by less than one percent during that time.

Table 72: Employment Status, Birmingham, 2010 and 2017

	2010	2017
Population 16 years and over	173,717	173,536
In labor force	61.4%	60.2%
Employed	53.4%	53.7%
Unemployment rate	12.9%	10.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Note: Labor force is a population over 16 years

The rate of unemployment across gender is equal at 10.5 percent, but the data shows significant disparities between racial and ethnic groups. The American Indian and Alaska Native community experiences significantly higher rates of unemployment than other racial and ethnic communities at 24.2 percent. The Black or African American community also has a high unemployment rate at 13.3 percent.



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Table 73: Unemployment Rate, Birmingham, 2017

	2017 Unemployment Rate
Male	10.5%
Female	10.5%
White alone	5.3%
Black or African American alone	13.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	24.2%
Asian alone	5.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.0%
Some other race alone	7.6%
Two or more races	8.8%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	7.7%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	5.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

2. Occupation by Industry

In addition to employment patterns, a closer look at where residents work helps to assess overall access to economic opportunity. Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance comprises 27 percent of the employed population over 16, the largest share of jobs in the City of Birmingham. This is followed by Retail Trade at 12 percent and Professional, Scientific, and Management, and Administrative and Waste Management Services at 10 percent.

Table 74: Occupations by Industry, Birmingham, 2017

	Estimate	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	93,129	(X)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	260	0%
Construction	3,969	4%
Manufacturing	7,811	8%
Wholesale trade	2,325	2%
Retail trade	10,756	12%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4,752	5%
Information	2,320	2%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	6,869	7%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	9,773	10%
Educational services and health care and social assistance	24,753	27%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodations and food services	10,943	12%
Other services except for public administration	4,989	5%
Public Administration	3,609	4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

3. Minimum Wage

The current minimum wage in the City of Birmingham is \$7.25 per hour. In February 2016, the City of Birmingham passed legislation to raise the city's minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to \$10.10 per



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hour, however, shortly before the ordinance was to go into effect, the Alabama state legislature passed a law preempting local governments from adopting minimum wages above the state’s minimum wage.⁶⁸

Based on MIT’s Living Wage Calculator, Birmingham’s minimum wage is \$4.73 below the \$11.98 living wage for one adult with no children and \$7.97 below the living wage for two working adults with one child, within the Birmingham-Hoover metropolitan region. A living wage is an hourly rate that an individual in a household must earn to support himself or herself and their family.⁶⁹

Birmingham’s workforce is a largely African-American and low wage, many of whom work for fast-food outlets and earn the minimum wage.⁷⁰ Based on the 2017 American Community Survey data, 23.3 percent of Birmingham’s industry comprises retail trade and arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation food services, which are typically minimum wage jobs. Additionally, one in five or 20.2 percent of Birmingham households have children under 18 years old and 52 percent of female-headed households with no husband present have children under 18 years.

Considering these large gaps between minimum and living wages, households with adults earning minimum wage would need additional assistance in securing housing in Birmingham.

4. Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is a key factor in future wages and economic opportunities. 28.5 percent of Birmingham’s population has a high school education, 23.6 percent have some college, but no degree, and 16.2 percent have a bachelor’s degree, which is up to par or slightly better than the state.

Table 75: Educational Attainment, Birmingham and Alabama, 2017

	Birmingham	Birmingham	Alabama	Alabama
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Population 25 years and over:	144,495	(x)	3,276,637	(X)
Less than 9th grade	5,095	3.50%	154,405	4.7%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	15,322	10.60%	326,654	10.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	41,131	28.50%	1,012,551	30.9%
Some college, no degree	34,154	23.60%	712,204	21.7%
Associate's degree	11,645	8.10%	267,245	8.2%
Bachelor's degree	23,409	16.20%	503,930	15.4%
Graduate or professional degree	13,739	9.50%	299,648	9.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Note: Labor force is a population over 16 years

⁶⁸ Economic Policy Institute, Minimum Wage Tracker, as of January 2020. Available at: https://www.epi.org/minimum-wage-tracker/#/min_wage/Alabama/Birmingham

⁶⁹ Living Wage Calculator. Available at: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/metros/13820>

⁷⁰ Roth, Zachary. February 2016. Birmingham Raises Minimum Wage and Alabama Takes it Away. Nbcnews.com. Available at: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/birmingham-raises-minimum-wage-alabama-takes-it-away-n526806>



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5. Education Quality

Other educational factors, such as the quality of the school and the graduation rates across grades, are variables that affect the overall access to opportunity. A comparison across the State of Alabama and the school district of the City of Birmingham reveals a gap in educational quality with the State scoring overall better than the City of Birmingham.⁷¹

Moreover, children attending elementary schools in their own neighborhood is a determinant for access to quality education. Based on historical and existing segregation patterns within the City of Birmingham, there continues to be a gap in resources to households and children with schools of quality. A lack of funding for schools within poorer neighborhoods and neighborhoods of color has affected the economic mobility of its children. This lack of mobility is exacerbated in distressed neighborhoods where parents within these households often lack the resources and experience to provide supportive or supplemental services for their children's education.⁷²

6. Broadband Access

Throughout the United States, there is a significant digital divide; a gap between those who have ready access to the internet and computers and those who do not. The divide is perpetuated by limitations that are geographical as well as financial, where persons cannot afford to pay a monthly service fee for Broadband service (an internet connection fast enough to stream a video). Nationwide, less than half of households living on or under \$20,000 are connected. This lack of internet access in communities supports a deficit in opportunity, education, and other prospects.⁷³

The figure below shows the number of fixed broadband providers. While the figure shows the number of providers available, it does not reflect the household level usage of broadband. From a fair housing perspective, ensuring that residential broadband is available to housing projects both within and in the outskirts of the city will support community viability and improve the quality of life for residents.

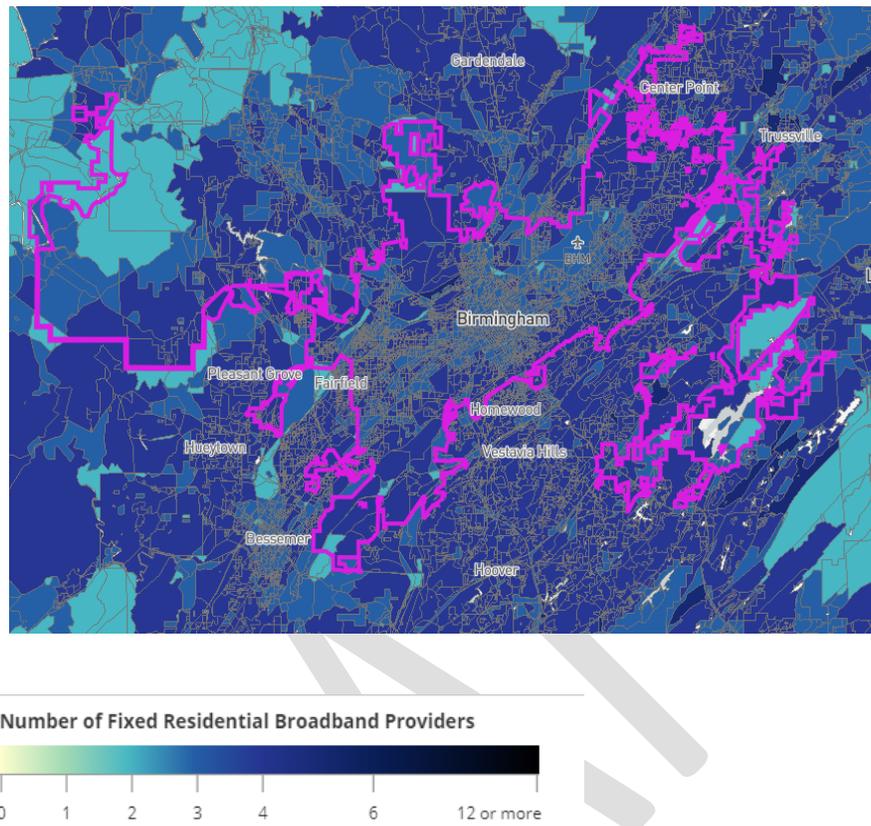
⁷¹ Alabama State Department of Education Report Card, 2019. Available at: <https://reportcard.alsde.edu/Alsde/SelectSchool>

⁷²Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, A Punishing Decade for School Funding, 2017. Available at: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/a-punishing-decade-for-school-funding>

⁷³ Vick, Karl. March 2017. The Digital Divide: A Quarter of the Nation is Without Broadband. Time. Available at: <https://time.com/4718032/the-digital-divide/>



Figure 15: Number of Fixed Residential Broadband



Source: Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Fixed Broadband Deployment, 2018

C. Environmental Justice and Health

Historically environmentally hazardous sites have been disproportionately placed in communities of color, leading to exposure to hazardous materials and a higher risk of health problems. Siting of these dangerous environmental sites corresponds with housing segregation and zoning, placing high intensity uses near areas zoned multifamily or redlined communities. Environmental Justice and fair housing advocacy both seek to address racial segregation, disparities in access to political power, municipal fragmentation, boundary-drawing around resources, disinvestment, and administrative silos.⁷⁴

The figure below displays the location of sites that report to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These sites include superfund sites- uncontrolled hazardous waste sites, toxic release sites-toxic chemical releases and waste management activities, air pollution sites- stationary sources of air pollution, and brownfields- previously developed land that is known or potentially contaminated. Extended exposure to these sites can cause a variety of harmful effects on human health and the environment.

⁷⁴ Haberle, Megan. 2017. Fair Housing and Environmental Justice: New Strategies and Challenges. Journal of Affordable Housing, Volume 26, Number 2.

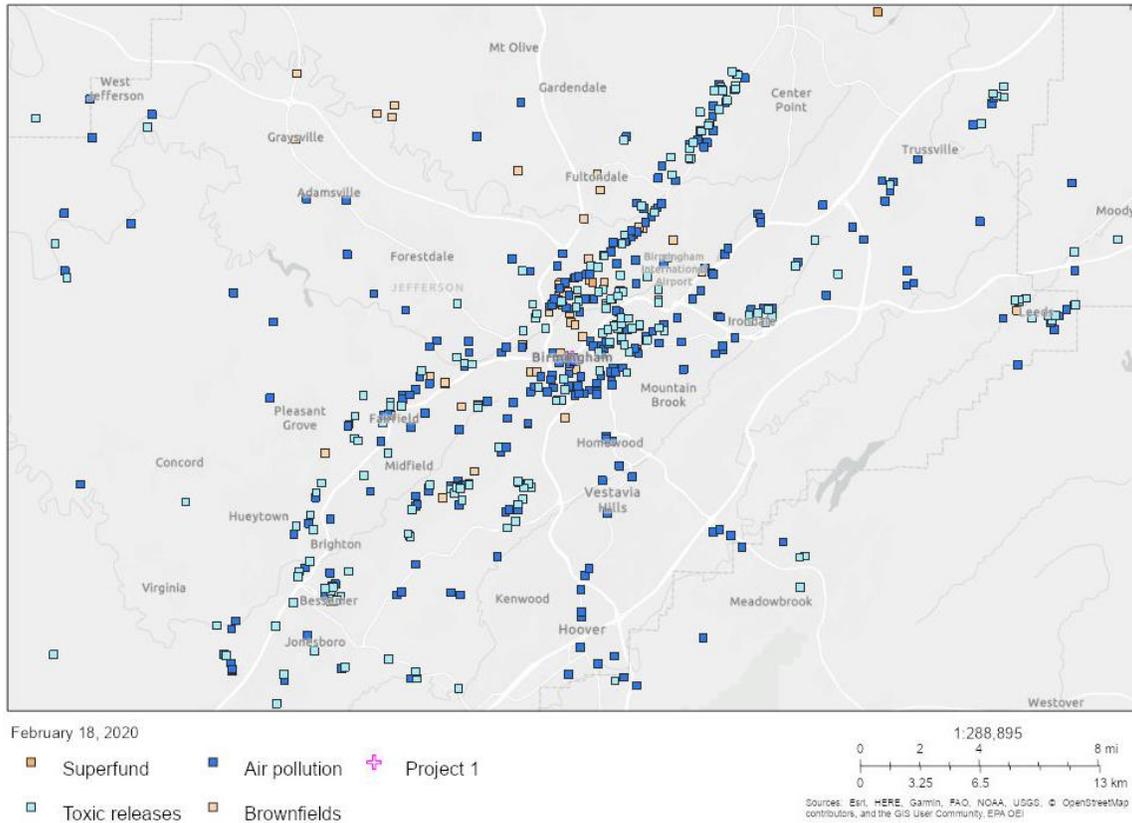


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Based on the figure below, Birmingham has a high concentration of sites reporting to EPA throughout the City of Birmingham. Concentrations of air pollution and toxic release sites are particularly high in the northeastern region of the city. These sites coincide with concentrations of communities of color, especially Black, Non-Hispanic populations, as well as concentrations of public housing and Project-based Section 8 housing described in later sections of this assessment.

Figure 16: Sites that Report to EPA in Birmingham



Source: Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool

Based on this data, meaningful advances need to take place around the location of publicly assisted housing and enforcing environmental justice regulations to provide communities with safe environments in which to live.

1. Lead-Based Paint

Despite progress in reducing blood-lead levels among the U.S. population, childhood lead poisoning remains a major preventable environmental health problem in the United States.⁷⁵ One of the main

⁷⁵ U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes. Guidelines for the Evaluation and Control of Lead-Based Paint Hazards in Housing (2012 Edition). Available at: <https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/LBPH-03.PDF>



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reasons for high blood-lead levels in the presence of lead-based paint in houses built before 1950. To combat this nationwide problem, HUD awarded \$139 million to 48 state and local government agencies in December 2018, including the City of Birmingham. The City received \$4.1 million to protect children and families from lead-based paint and home health hazards.⁷⁶ With this funding, the City of Birmingham implemented the Lead Hazard Reduction Demonstration Program to clean up dangerous lead low-income housing in the area. AS of 2018, the City of Birmingham had targeted at least 275 low-housing units through such proactive intervention.⁷⁷

Additionally, the program protects children and families from lead-based paint and home health hazards to establish decent, safe, and sanitary housing. According to the City's 2018 CAPER, through this program, the City provided the opportunity for a number of its housing inspectors to become certified in testing and abating lead-based paint, particularly through training provided by Safe State at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.⁷⁸

The figure below shows the level of exposure to lead-based paint housing throughout the City of Birmingham. The majority of communities near downtown Birmingham are within the 80-95 percentile of exposure to lead-based paint, while there are a few communities in northeast, central and southwest of Birmingham that are within the 95-100 percentile of being exposed to lead paint. Communities on the outskirts of the city boundary have much lower levels of lead paint exposure.

Continuing to put resources toward cleaning up lead-based paint homes, especially in low-income housing, will help to improve the overall quality of housing that is provided throughout the City of Birmingham.

⁷⁶ Birmingham City Council. December 2018. Press Release: HUD awards Birmingham \$4.1 million to protect families from lead-based paint. Available at: <https://www.birminghamal.gov/2018/12/21/hud-awards-birmingham-4-1-million-to-protect-families-from-lead-based-paint/>

⁷⁷ HUD, FY18 OPA Project Descriptions https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PA/documents/FY18_LBPHR_Project_Descriptions.pdf

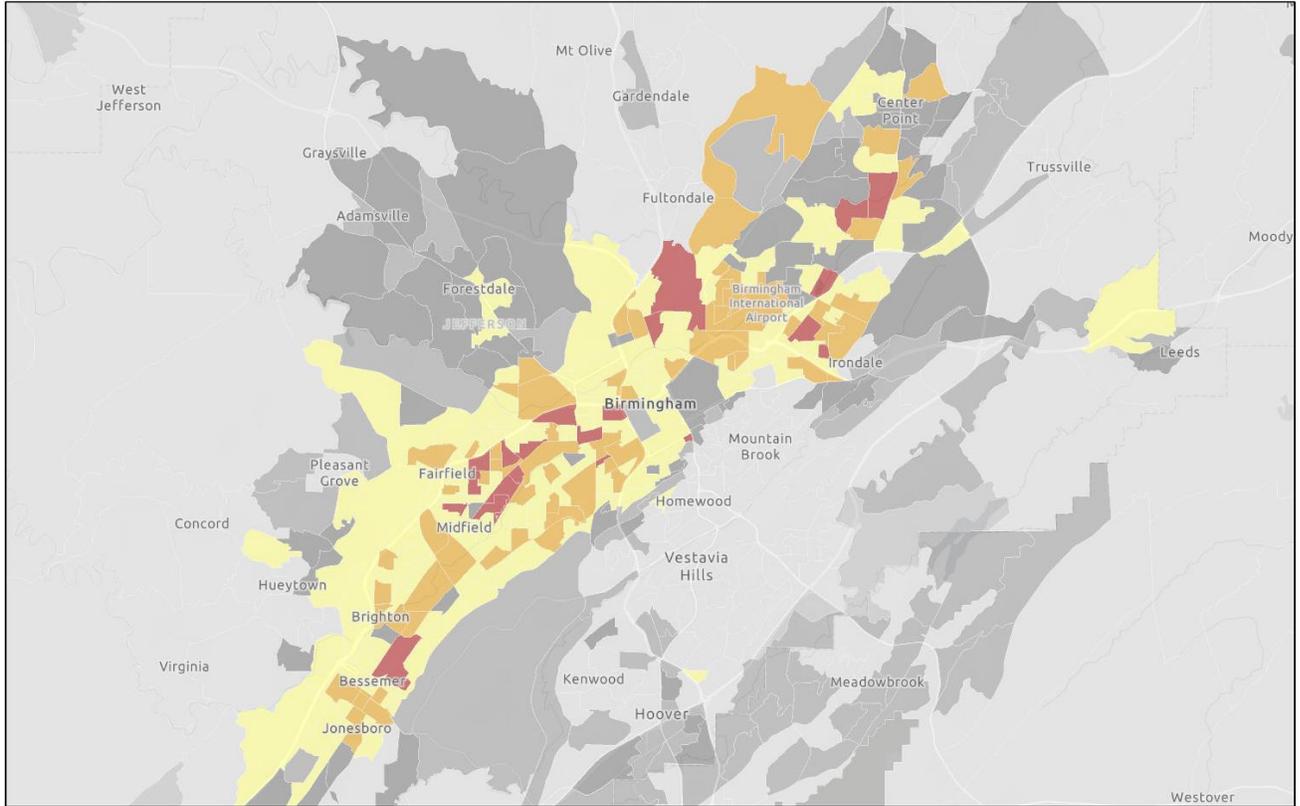
⁷⁸ City of Birmingham 2018 HUD Approved CAPER



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Figure 17: Lead-Based Paint, Birmingham, 2017



February 18, 2020

Lead Paint Indicator (National Percentiles)

50 -60 percentile	80 - 90 percentile
60 -70 percentile	90 - 95 percentile
70 -80 percentile	95 - 100 percentile
Less than 50 percentile	

Data not available

1:288,895

0 2 4 8 mi

0 3.25 6.5 13 km

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Sources: Environmental Protection Agency, 2020



IX. Homeownership and Lending Analysis

1. Introduction

Homeownership provides a path towards building wealth and gaining long-term housing stability.⁷⁹ At the same time, low-income households and protected classes continue to lack access to fair lending opportunities or lag behind in the economic benefits associated with homeownership due to the lingering effects of historic lending practices and policies that systematically excluded members of protected classes from homeownership opportunities. The following section analyzes current lending patterns within Birmingham and the greater metropolitan area to assess overall access to home lending for protected classes to identify potential barriers to fair housing.

Home lending patterns are established using the latest available data from the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) for the Birmingham-Hoover Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) 2007 to 2018, with an emphasis on information available from 2018. The MSA is the smallest available geographic unit in the 2018 HMDA dataset, which also provides a broader understanding of the regional lending trends occurring in the Birmingham area. The chapter pays close attention to lending disparities, denial rates, and denial reasons, such as debt-to-income ratio, down payment, or credit history, for protected classes.

2. Loan Origination, Type, and Purpose

Mortgage originations in Birmingham vary from year to year. From 2015 to 2018, there was an average of 26,614 originations per year, ranging from 25,388 in 2015 to 28,314 in 2016. Although there are no clear trends in the data provided in the table below, growing concerns with lackluster housing production and the tightening of lending and credit standards, as expressed by local developers through focus groups and conversations, in recent years have led to some market uncertainty in the region. Nonetheless, mortgage brokers expect lending to pick up as cuts in the federal interest rates take effect.⁸⁰

Table 76: All Originated Mortgages, Birmingham, 2007- 2018

Year	All originated mortgages	% Change from Previous Year
2018	27,341	7.6%
2017	25,412	-10.2%
2016	28,314	11.5%
2015	25,388	

Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data, 2018

In 2018, 69 percent of all lending activity in Birmingham was in the form of conventional loans, which are private loans that are not backed by a governmental entity. Nationally, conventional loans comprise

⁷⁹ Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2019 <https://www.ichs.harvard.edu/research-areas/homeownership>

⁸⁰ Birmingham Business Journal, "Many Bham mortgage brokers expect uptick after rate cut," 2019. <https://www.bizjournals.com/birmingham/news/2019/09/06/many-bham-mortgage-brokers-expect-uptick-after.html>



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75 percent of all lending activity.⁸¹ A smaller percentage of conventional loans in Birmingham may signal market gaps in the local private lending market and possibly indicate a lack of savings and income for residents in Birmingham. This is further supported by higher rates of FHA loans, 20 percent, which are mortgages issued by lenders approved by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and insured by the FHA. These loans have lower down payment requirements and other underwriting criteria that make them more accessible to borrowers with limited assets or lower credit scores.⁸² Based on HMDA data, nationwide FHA loans represented 15 percent of all mortgage lending activity in 2018.⁸³ Other loans, such as Veterans Administration (VA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) loans, which are tailored for particular borrowers, such as veterans in the case of VA loans and rural residents in the case of USDA loans, were about 11 percent of all lending activity in the area. These types of loans help to address potential lending gaps for borrowers that have historically needed additional support to secure a mortgage.

Table 77: Loan Type, All Purposes, Birmingham MSA, 2018

Loan Type	# of Records	\$ Amount	Percent of Total
Conventional	37,549	6,876,875,000	69%
FHA	10,667	1,604,705,000	20%
VA	4,389	904,865,000	8%
USDA	1,503	209,415,000	3%

Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data, 2018

A market that relies more heavily on conventional loans is an indicator of a healthy lending and real estate market, as borrowers and lenders opt for more conventional loans. However, a shift from government-backed mortgages may also signal a narrowing of options for borrowers from protected classes that have been historically left out of the private mortgage market and homeownership. In the case of Birmingham, 2018 data indicates that there is a fairly balanced market that responds to the financial need of all borrowers in the area.

In addition to home purchase loans, cash-out or refinancing products were key components of the local lending market of 2018. Approximately 30 percent of the lending activity was for refinancing or cash-out purposes in comparison to 54.5 percent for home purchases in 2018. Moreover, the median dollar amount of home purchase loans was only slightly higher than a refinancing loan at \$198,869 and \$186,400, respectively. Meanwhile, home improvement loans were about 7 percent of the lending with an average of \$91,570 per loan. Such lending profile in Birmingham presents the picture of a market that remains largely focused on home purchases and where home values have yet to reach levels high enough to incentivize lending institutions and homeowners to invest in home improvement or refinancing loans.

⁸¹ "Conventional Loans," Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Available at: <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home/loan-options/conventional-loans/>

⁸² "Let FHA Help You," U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Available at: <https://www.hud.gov/buying/loans>

⁸³ FFEIC, HMDA Dataset <https://ffiec.cfpb.gov/data-browser/data/2018?category=nationwide>



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Table 78: Loan Purpose, Birmingham MSA, 2018

Loan Purpose	# of Records	\$ Amount	Percent of total
Home Purchase	29,474	5,861,470,000	54.5%
Home Improvement	3,671	336,155,000	6.8%
Refinancing	7,880	1,468,830,000	14.6%
Cash Out Refinancing	8,113	1,504,605,000	15.0%
Other Purpose	3,850	307,170,000	7.1%
Not Applicable	1,120	117,630,000	2.1%

Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data, 2018

A closer look into home purchase loans alone reveals similar patterns to the lending market as a whole. Conventional loans are the primary loan type at 64 percent of all home purchases in 2018. FHA loans accounted for 23 percent, while VA and USDA loans were about 13 percent. With about a third of the home purchase loans coming from sources backed by a government entity, the home purchase market remains proactive in responding to the needs of lower income households and members of protected classes. At the same time, the market is also responding to the needs of borrowers able to qualify for traditional home loans through the private market.

Table 79: Loan Type, Home Purchases, Birmingham MSA, 2018

Loan Type	# of Records	\$ Amount	Percent of Total
Conventional	18,869	4,041,055,000	64%
FHA	6,789	1,101,075,000	23%
VA	2,358	515,280,000	8%
USDA	1,458	204,060,000	5%

Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data, 2018

Based on the 2018 HMDA data, which relies on self-reporting, most loans were given to Non-Hispanic Whites in the Birmingham area. White borrowers were 77.5 percent of all loans, while the same demographic was about 25 percent of the population of the City of Birmingham and 52.1 percent of Jefferson County in 2017. The 2018 data supports Birmingham’s previous Analysis of Impediments, which identified that many communities of color face challenges in entering the home lending market in the jurisdiction.⁸⁴ As described in the table below, while Non-Hispanic Black or African Americans represented 71 percent of Birmingham’s population in 2017, Black or African American borrowers and co-borrowers represented only 18 percent of the home lending activity of the area. Moreover, the average loan amount for Non-Hispanic White borrowers was significantly higher at \$175,570, compared to \$133,169 for Non-Hispanic Black or African American borrowers. Such discrepancies highlight a

⁸⁴ 2015 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. Available at: <https://www.birminghamal.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Birmingham-AI-FINAL.pdf>



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disparity in access to capital for communities of color in the Birmingham area, limiting access to homeownership, and in turn long-term wealth and stability.

It is worth noting, however, that despite only representing about 2 percent of the lending activity in the area, Asian borrowers had the highest average loan amount recorded. Moreover, since the derived variable provided by HMDA combines borrower and co-borrower characteristics, about 1 percent of loans reported as “Joint” where the borrower and co-borrower stood for a combination of White and non-White races that could not be classified under one of the other race categories.⁸⁵

Table 80: Lending Activity, Derived Race of Borrower, Non-Hispanic or Latino, Birmingham MSA, 2018

Race (Not Hispanic or Latino)	# of Records	Percent of Loans	Total Amount	Average Loan Amount
White	32,694	77.5%	\$5,740,090,000	\$175,570
Black or African American	7,751	18.4%	\$1,032,195,000	\$133,169
Asian	764	1.8%	\$163,940,000	\$214,581
Joint	322	0.8%	\$66,390,000	\$206,180
American Indian or Alaska Native	117	0.3%	\$14,375,000	\$122,863
Two or more minority races	43	0.1%	\$4,555,000	\$105,930
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	38	0.1%	\$6,190,000	\$162,895
Free Form Text Only	1	0.0%	\$105,000	\$105,000
Race Not Available	438	1.0%	\$75,130,000	\$171,530

Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data, 2018

Though not at the levels of Black or African American borrowers, Hispanic or Latino borrowers were also underrepresented in the home lending activity of the area in 2018. As the table below highlights, Hispanic or Latinos borrowers were only about 2 percent of all lending activity of the area, though they are about 4 percent of the area’s population. Moreover, the average loan amount of \$136,781 for Hispanic or Latino borrowers was significantly lower than the average loan amount of \$168,445 for Non-Hispanic or Latino borrowers.

Table 81: Lending Activity, Derived Ethnicity of Borrower, Birmingham MSA, 2018

Ethnicity	# of Records	Percent of Loans	Total Amount	Average Loan Amount
Hispanic or Latino	1,078	2.0%	\$147,450,000	\$136,781
Not Hispanic or Latino	42,168	78.5%	\$7,102,970,000	\$168,445
Ethnicity Not Available	10,486	19.5%	\$2,286,020,000	\$218,007

Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data, 2018.

In addition to challenges based on race and ethnicity in the local lending market, there is also a gender gap in lending activity. As the table below demonstrates, female borrowers represented approximately 30 percent of all lending activity in 2018. Male borrowers represented 42.8 percent of all lending activity during the same time period. Moreover, the average loan amount by gender differed widely with the

⁸⁵ Derived Fields Categorization, CFPB. Available at: <https://github.com/cfpb/hmda-platform/wiki/Derived-Fields-Categorization>



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average loan amount for males at \$166,012 and females at \$135,563. It is worth noting that the HMDA dataset also provides data on Joint applications with male and female co-applicants, which accounted for about 38 percent of the lending activity in the area and higher average loan amounts at \$195,405.

Table 82: Lending Activity, Derived Sex, Birmingham MSA, 2018

Sex	# of Records	Percent of Loans	\$ Amount	Average Loan Amount
Female	12,458	29.9%	\$1,688,840,000	\$135,563
Joint	15,628	37.5%	\$3,053,790,000	\$195,405
Male	17,834	42.8%	\$2,960,660,000	\$166,012
Sex Not Available	8,188	19.7%	\$1,892,570,000	\$231,139

Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data, 2018

Looking at the intersection of race and sex, both protected classes, White women represent the majority of the lending market. Approximately 65 percent of female borrowers were White, while Black or African American female borrowers represented about 29 percent of the lending activity. Though a variety of factors may be contributing to such distribution, the gap is worth noting as Birmingham continues to expand access to opportunity for all its residents.

Table 83: Lending Activity, Female Borrowers by Race, Birmingham MSA, 2018

Female Borrowers by Race	# of Records	Percent of Loans
White	8,079	64.8%
Black or African American	3,628	29.1%
Race Not Available	473	3.8%
Asian	177	1.4%
American Indian or Alaska Native	54	0.4%
Two or more minority races	26	0.2%
Joint	11	0.1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	8	0.1%
Free Form Text Only	2	0.0%

Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data, 2018

B. Loan Denials

In addition to overall application numbers, a closer look at denial rates per loan type, loan purpose, and borrower demographics helps to reveal potential disparities in the home lending market.

As the table below highlights, conventional loans represent the largest percent of denials across all loans and have the highest rates of denials within each of the loan types. At 76 percent of all denials, conventional loans had the highest proportion of denials. Within the individual loan type, about 20 percent of conventional loans were denied, while government-backed FHA and VA loans have denial rates of approximately 14 percent and 15 percent, respectively.



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Table 84: Loan Application Denials, Loan Type, Birmingham MSA 2018

Loan Type	# of Applications Denied	\$ Amount	% of Denials within Loan Type	% of All Denials
Conventional	7,313	776,175,000	19.5%	75.9%
FHA	1,526	204,250,000	14.3%	15.8%
VA	668	124,550,000	15.2%	6.9%
USDA	122	17,330,000	8.1%	1.3%

Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data, 2018

Though home purchase loans had the highest rate of denial among all loans, home improvement loans had one of the highest rates of denial when examined by loan purpose, at about 43 percent. Other purpose loans, which are all loans with more underwriting hurdles and used for transactions other than home purchases, home improvements, refinancing, or cash-out refinancing, had a denial rate of about 41 percent. It is worth noting that despite having the highest percentage of all denials, home purchase loans had the lowest rate of denial among each category of loans at 9 percent. A low denial rate within home purchase loans points to a market in which self-selective mechanisms or formal review processes by financial institutions, such as pre-approvals, encourage qualified buyers to submit official loan applications.

Table 85: Loan Application Denials, Loan Purpose, Birmingham MSA 2018

Loan Purpose	# of Applications Denied	\$ Amount	% of Denials within Loan Purpose	% of All Denials
Home Purchase	2,613	347,655,000	8.9%	27.1%
Home Improvement	1,497	92,005,000	40.8%	15.5%
Refinancing	1,876	281,150,000	23.8%	19.5%
Cash Out Refinancing	1,984	297,830,000	24.5%	20.6%
Other Purpose	1,659	103,665,000	43.1%	17.2%
Not Applicable	0	0	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data, 2018

Across the Birmingham area, non-White borrowers have a higher percentage of denial rates within each race or ethnicity for all lending activity in the area. This includes home purchase, home improvement, refinancing, and other purpose loans. For example, Black or African American applicants were twice as likely to be denied in comparison to White applications at 32 percent of denials for the group. White and Asian borrowers had the lowest denial rates at 16.5 and 17.8 percent, respectively. Lastly, Hispanic or Latino borrowers had denial rates at 21.8 percent for 2018.



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Table 86: Total Denials by Derived Race and Ethnicity, Birmingham MSA 2018

Race/Ethnicity	# of Applications Denied	% Percent for Group	% Percent of All Denials
2 or more minority races	24	42.9%	0.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	53	36.3%	0.6%
Asian	147	17.8%	1.5%
Black or African American	2,603	31.8%	27.0%
Free Form Text Only	3	75.0%	0.03%
Joint	75	20.9%	0.8%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	19	32.2%	0.2%
Race Not Available	978	10.0%	10.2%
White	5,727	16.5%	59.5%
Ethnicity			
Hispanic or Latino	235	21.8%	2.4%

Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data, 2018

1. Loan Denial Reasons for Home Purchases

In addition to general denial rates based on the loan type, loan purpose, and borrower characteristics, an assessment of the primary reasons provided for application denials helps to understand potential barriers keeping borrowers from accessing homeownership opportunities. The following section examines denial reasons through the lens of race and ethnicity to reveal potential barriers to fair housing choice in the home buying market for protected classes.

As explored in the table below, the reasons for loan denials were consistent among demographic groups with debt-to-income ratio, credit history, and unverifiable information being among the top reasons in 2018. For some borrowers, a debt-to-income ratio was the primary reason given by financial institutions for denial of an application. For example, 75 percent of the denials of Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic borrowers were due to a debt-to-income ratio issue. Asian, Non-Hispanic borrowers also had a significant rate of denial due to the debt-to-income ratio at 51.2 percent. Meanwhile, credit history was the top reason given for denial for Black or African-American, Non-Hispanic and White, Non-Hispanic borrowers at 33.8 and 38.1 percent respectively. Lastly, unverifiable information and incomplete credit applications were an issue for American Indian or Alaska Native, Non-Hispanic borrowers.

It is worth pointing out that though Hispanic or Latino borrowers made up only a fraction of the lending activity. The denial reasons given for the group reflected similar trends noted in other demographic groups with debt-to-income and credit history being the top reasons for loan denial.



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Table 87: Primary Reason Provided for Denial by Derived Race and Ethnicity, Home Purchases, Birmingham MSA, 2018

Principal Denial Reason	American Indian or Alaska Native, Non-Hispanic	Asian, Non-Hispanic	Black or African American, Non-Hispanic	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	White, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic or Latino	Two or more minority races	Joint
Debt-to-income ratio	20.0%	51.2%	27.8%	75.0%	23.6%	31.3%	42.9%	16.1%
Employment history	0.0%	4.9%	1.8%	0.0%	1.8%	1.5%	0.0%	3.2%
Credit history	20.0%	2.4%	33.8%	0.0%	38.1%	23.2%	42.9%	51.6%
Collateral	0.0%	17.1%	9.0%	0.0%	10.4%	10.8%	0.0%	6.5%
Insufficient cash (down payment, closing costs)	0.0%	0.0%	4.9%	0.0%	3.5%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Unverifiable information	30.0%	9.8%	5.2%	0.0%	8.2%	11.6%	14.3%	6.5%
Credit application incomplete	30.0%	7.3%	6.7%	0.0%	7.0%	11.2%	0.0%	9.7%
Mortgage insurance denied	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	0.0%	7.3%	10.5%	25.0%	7.5%	7.7%	0.0%	6.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data, 2018



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2. Loan Denial Based on Race, Ethnicity, and Income

The following section explores denial rates based on race, ethnicity, and income. This analysis provides insight into the financial and economic challenges that contribute to a lack of homeownership opportunities for low-income borrowers in the Birmingham area. To assess potential challenges, the section uses derived variables provided by HMDA that combine borrower and co-borrower information for home purchase loans in 2018. Income data is measured through the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council-calculated Median Family Income (MFI), which estimates median family incomes for metropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and nonmetropolitan portions of each state, including the Birmingham MSA.

As the table below highlights, non-White, low-income borrowers are experiencing disproportionate levels of denial rates in comparison to White borrowers. For example, in the extremely low-income bracket of 30 percent and below MFI, Black or African American borrowers had 12.5 percent denial rates, while White borrowers had a zero percent denial rate. At the 31 to 50 percent MFI bracket, Asian borrowers had a significantly high denial rate of 66.7 percent. Meanwhile, Black or African American borrowers in the same income bracket had a 19 percent denial rate, while White borrowers in the same income bracket had a 10.8 percent denial rate. In the 51 to 100 percent MFI bracket, Hispanic and American Indian or Alaskan Native borrowers had a significantly higher denial rate of 28.5 and 31.8 percent respectively. For Black or African American and White borrowers, the denial rates in this income group were similar at 19.4 and 19.3 percent respectively. Lastly, Asian borrowers had a lower denial rate of 9.7 percent and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders had a zero percent denial rate.

Moving beyond 100 percent MFI, denial rates become more consistent among demographic groups, though challenges remain for some non-White borrowers. For example, American Indian or Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander borrowers consistently record higher denial rates across higher income brackets. Though these higher rates may be a result of a smaller sample size of loans for those groups that may easily sway those rates, the consistency across income brackets indicates there may be additional hurdles for these communities in the lending market. Furthermore, across these higher income brackets, Asian and White borrowers recorded the lowest denial rates, while Black or African American and Hispanic borrowers consistently posted higher denial rates in the same income groups.

Race and ethnicity appear to be the main factors in loan denial rates in the Birmingham area, adjusting for income. The data indicates that Black or African American, Hispanic, American Indian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander borrowers face the most challenges in the lending market. Though factors outside of explicit discrimination may be contributing to these discrepancies, such as general access to capital, location of financial institutions, financial literacy, and the location or value of the asset being underwritten, lack of access to credit impacts communities color in the Birmingham area and limits greater social and economic opportunity.



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Table 88: Home Purchase Loan Denials by Derived Race, 30 Percent and Below FFIEC Median Family Income, Birmingham MSA 2018

Race	Income Bracket (Percent of FFIEC Median Family Income)	Total Loan Applications	Number of Loans Denied	Number of Loans that Were Denied
American Indian or Alaskan Native	30% and Below	0	0	0.0%
Asian	30% and Below	0	0	0.0%
Black or African American	30% and Below	16	2	12.5%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	30% and Below	0	0	0.0%
White	30% and Below	14	0	0.0%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	31%-50%	0	0	0.0%
Asian	31%-50%	6	4	66.7%
Black or African American	31%-50%	135	26	19.3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	31%-50%	0	0	0.0%
White	31%-50%	120	13	10.8%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	51%-100%	22	7	31.8%
Asian	51%-100%	93	9	9.7%
Black or African American	51%-100%	1687	328	19.4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	51%-100%	7	0	0.0%
White	51%-100%	6236	1205	19.3%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	101%-150%	20	3	15.0%
Asian	101%-150%	171	14	8.2%
Black or African American	101%-150%	1840	250	13.6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	101%-150%	14	2	14.3%
White	101%-150%	7737	724	9.4%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	151%-200%	7	3	42.9%
Asian	151%-200%	171	14	8.2%
Black or African American	151%-200%	315	35	11.1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	151%-200%	11	2	18.2%
White	151%-200%	3179	207	6.5%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	201%-300%	0	0	0.0%
Asian	201%-300%	51	3	5.9%
Black or African American	201%-300%	49	5	10.2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	201%-300%	0	0	0.0%
White	201%-300%	1016	70	6.9%
Ethnicity				
Hispanic or Latino	30% and Below	1	0	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino	31%-50%	11	0	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino	51%-100%	270	77	28.5%
Hispanic or Latino	101%-150%	296	38	12.8%
Hispanic or Latino	151%-200%	109	19	17.4%
Hispanic or Latino	201%-300%	15	2	13.3%

Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data, 2018



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C. Discussion of Results

As data from this chapter has shown, discrepancies in the home lending market have not significantly improved for communities of color in the Birmingham area since the last Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in 2015. Based on HMDA data, recent lending activity does not reflect the racial or ethnic composition of the area. Black or African American and Hispanic borrowers are underrepresented and White borrowers overrepresented in the local market. Moreover, denial rates by race or ethnicity are disproportionately impacting communities of color, regardless of income. Female, Black or African American borrowers, in particular, are experiencing hurdles in effectively securing a home loan in the area.

The 2018 HMDA data also reveals that issues related to debt-to-income ratios and credit history are the main reasons for loan denials in the area. Other factors, such as adequate collateral, down payments, and mortgage insurance, are playing a drastically less significant role in loan denials. Though these denial reasons are affecting all borrowers, in some cases, such as with debt-to-income ratios, the effects are experienced more pronouncedly by Asian and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander borrowers.

When borrowers from communities of color are able to secure a loan, their average loan amounts are often lower than those from White borrowers. Such differences highlight the ongoing struggle for communities of color in securing adequate capital to access the home buying market in the area and ultimately build lasting family wealth.

Looking ahead, the City of Birmingham will continue to monitor these lending patterns to tailor local programs to meet the needs of all residents and encourage greater financial security and homeownership opportunities in the jurisdiction.



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X. Review of Regulations and Policies

Since 1968, the Fair Housing Act has prohibited explicit and implicit discriminatory practices through land use policies, building codes, public services, and other public and private practices, such as conditional or special use permits and real estate broker steering, that limit access to fair housing choice for members of protected classes.⁸⁶

Though examples and effects of such practices vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, in general, public and private policies should aim to further fair housing goals and proactively address potentially discriminatory practices and trends. The following sections examine critical public and private policy areas and their potential impact on fair housing choice in Birmingham.

A. Birmingham Planning and Zoning

The Fair Housing Act of 1968 and the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, make it unlawful for local governments to utilize their authority, including zoning and land use, to discriminate against protected classes, including communities of color and persons with disabilities.⁸⁷

Zoning ordinances and land use regulations are designed to regulate the development and use of property, in some cases, the promotion or preservation of other factors, such as community character, site and location of services, housing typology, and the overall planning process, may deter fair housing choice by limiting housing choice and access to protected classes.⁸⁸

The following section provides an overview of the City of Birmingham's land use and zoning policies and their potential impact on promoting fair housing choice.

Stakeholders and participants of public meetings identified the need to streamline zoning and permitting to ensure that projects are approved and that the city is able to meet its existing housing needs, particularly for affordable housing that serves protected classes.

1. Zoning and Site Selection

The City of Birmingham last updated its zoning ordinances in December 2019. The City adopted its Comprehensive Plan in 2013 and continues to implement the Comprehensive Plan through the City's Framework Planning process in collaboration with the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) to develop and complete nine framework plans. As of 2020, five framework plans have been

⁸⁶ HUD, History of Fair Housing. Available at: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/aboutfheo/history

⁸⁷ DOJ and HUD, State and Local Land Use Laws and Practices and the Application of the Fair Housing Act, 2016. Available at: <https://www.justice.gov/crt/page/file/909956/download>

⁸⁸ Knapp, Gerrit et al. "Zoning as a Barrier to Multifamily Housing Development." American Planning Association. 2007. Available at: https://www.huduser.gov/Publications/pdf/zoning_MultifmlyDev.pdf



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completed for Titusville, North Birmingham, Western Area, Northeast Area, and Southwest Area, East Birmingham, and Pratt Ensley.⁸⁹

Through its Framework Planning, the City of Birmingham has made significant steps to modernize its land use and zoning. Despite this progress in planning for area-specific planning, the City's zoning and site selection for protected classes need further refinement. For example, Adult Care Centers and Child Care Centers are not permitted in most residential zoning districts and are only permitted in other zoning districts through special conditions or exceptions. Moreover, communal living facilities, family group homes, and caretaker dwelling units face additional siting and zoning hurdles that may limit access to protected classes. For instance, as described in Chapter 4, Part C of the Zoning Ordinance, "each Family Day/Night Care Family Group Day/Night Care Home operator shall apply for a ZCO, which shall be accompanied by a fee as adopted by the Council."⁹⁰ Such additional requirements not only increase the cost but may also reduce the availability of such usages and structures for protected classes in the jurisdiction in the long-term.

2. Minimum Floor Space Requirements

In addition to siting limitations, city ordinances requiring minimum or maximum floor space, such as requiring 50 square feet of usable space for each adult in Adult Care Centers and no more than 30 percent of the required rear yard for playground equipment for a childcare center in a dwelling district, may increase the construction cost associated with these spaces. In the long term, these requirements may impact members of a protected class, who are likely to use Adult Care Centers. As with siting and zoning issues, the City should work to ensure that minimum floor space requirements meet community and resident needs in the broad sense and that reasonable accommodation is available and approved on a case-by-case basis.

3. Manufactured Housing

In addition to special siting or spatial requirements, the location of certain types of housing is limited in the City's current zoning ordinance. For example, manufacturing housing is only permitted in the D-1, D-2, D-3, D-4, D-5, D-6 and PRD districts through a special exception that is granted by the zoning board after additional special conditions are met.⁹¹ These added conditions include an additional application and a minimum size of 1,200 square feet and a width of 24 feet. Additional design requirements, such as exterior finish siding, front doors, and walkways, also serve to limit options and potentially add to the cost of manufactured housing in the jurisdiction. The City should look to develop policies and procedures to provide reasonable accommodation for protected classes looking to use manufactured housing as a primary dwelling unit.

4. Reasonable Accommodation

Currently, the City's Zoning ordinance lacks explicit reasonable accommodation language to account for requests from persons with disabilities in the jurisdiction seeking to amend or request an exception or adjustment to a zoning policy or ordinance. Under the Fair Housing Act, it is unlawful to refuse to make "reasonable accommodations" to rules, policies, practices, or services when such accommodations may be

⁸⁹City of Birmingham, Framework Plans. Available at: <https://www.imaginebham.com/about.html>

⁹⁰ City of Birmingham, Zoning Ordinance, Updated 2019. Available at: https://www.birminghamal.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/PEPZNINF_ZoningOrdinance_1219.pdf

⁹¹ City of Birmingham, Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 4, Section 3, Updated 2019. Available at: https://www.birminghamal.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/PEPZNINF_ZoningOrdinance_1219.pdf



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necessary to afford persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. Without clear language or an explicit mechanism to handle such requests, the City limits residents of protected classes in asserting their fair housing protections. The city may address this by examining its zoning ordinance and review the apparatus through which reasonable accommodation requests are handled.

5. Multifamily and Accessory Dwelling Units

The City of Birmingham and its Department of Planning, Engineering, and Permits have made significant progress through its neighborhood framework planning and Comprehensive Plan updates in expanding multifamily development and other uses for protected classes, such as accessory dwelling units and mixed-use districts, across the jurisdiction. Despite this modernization of the zoning, some existing limitations remain. For example, permitted location of townhouses and duplexes and parking requirements for accessory dwelling units will expand housing choice for protected classes by expanding a variety of housing types throughout the city. Moreover, a more detailed examination of multifamily development and zoning practices should ensure that displacement patterns or implicit effects do not disproportionately impact low-income households and protected classes of Birmingham.

B. Building Code (Accessibility)

At the time of publication of this report the City of Birmingham has not adopted building codes that expand accessibility for protected classes, particularly persons with ambulatory disabilities. However, the State of Alabama adopted the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design into its building code in 2010, thus providing additional expectations and safeguards regarding access for persons with disabilities.⁹²

C. Social Services

In addition to providing zoning, land use, and building code guidance to further or protect fair housing goals, the City of Birmingham impacts fair housing access and opportunities through municipal social services. The City provides an array of services including public transportation, public works (water and sewage), and social justice and inclusion. The following sections explore these services and their potential impact on fair housing.

1. Public Transportation

In the City of Birmingham, the Department of Transportation (BDOT) is responsible for transportation-related services, including:

- Transportation system design
- Transportation system permitting
- Signal system engineering, analysis, and planning
- Signal maintenance
- Lighting maintenance

⁹²Alabama State Building Code <http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/bldg/170-X-2.pdf>



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- Signs and markings maintenance
- Bridge, paving, sidewalk, and tunnel inspection and planning
- On-street parking system management⁹³

BDOT develops and maintains safe and efficient multimodal transportation to support walkable, vibrant communities and promote a high quality of life, a healthy environment, and strong economic vitality. In recent years, the Department has launched a series of innovative transportation projects including: launching a micro-transit pilot, working on a City-Wide Transportation Plan, and in planning for the Birmingham Xpress (BX), which will be a new, regional Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) transit system that will serve the communities of Birmingham and surrounding areas. Long-term planning for the BX includes Transit-Oriented Development to incentivize greater community development in nodes across the city and region. The figure below shows transit routes for the City of Birmingham but does not fully capture the level of service provided by each route.

In addition to the local work of BDOT, regional transit needs are met by Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCT). As the transportation leader of Central Alabama, BJCT operates the Metro Area Express (MAX) bus system. The system averages approximately 3 million riders each year. Though the BJCTA does not receive dedicated funding from the Alabama Department of Transportation, federal funds and local funding from a beer tax, ad valorem taxes, and municipalities support helps to sustain their work.⁹⁴

In addition to the MAX system, BJCTA also operates a Paratransit system to serve the transportation needs of persons with disabilities in the region. Other services include the Magic City Connector, connecting residents and visitors to economic nodes within Birmingham, and the Birmingham Central Market, which aims to bring fresh produce to residents of Birmingham.⁹⁵

In addition to these services, in 2019 the City of Birmingham launched an on-demand transportation pilot program with Via, a leader in on-demand public mobility. The pilot creates an additional layer of services for residents in the city by booking a shared ride for a flat-rate fee of \$1.50. The partnership is supported by the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham and is expected to extend public transportation for select areas of the city.⁹⁶

Connecting land use patterns, housing, and employment needs with public transportation in Birmingham will take years of long-term planning. But recent efforts, such as the BX and continued expansion of the MAX system, are poised to make a difference for residents and protected classes in the jurisdiction. Moreover, tailored programs such as Paratransit and on-demand transit partnerships with Via are helping to address existing gaps in accessibility and availability of public transportation in the area.

⁹³ City of Birmingham, BDOT Overview. Available at: <https://www.birminghamal.gov/about/city-directory/transportation>

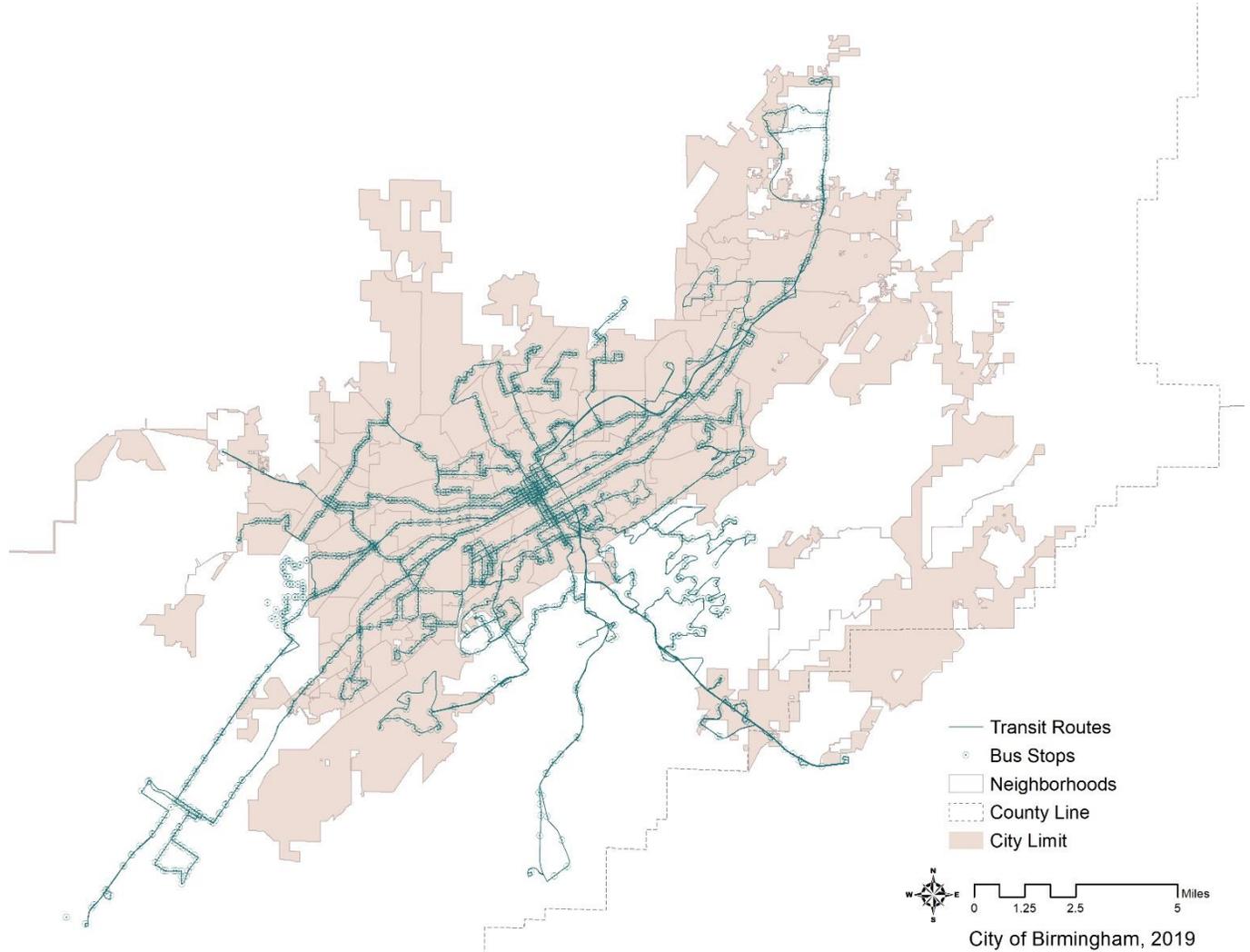
⁹⁴ Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority, Mission and Vision. Available at: <https://maxtransit.org/about-us/mission-and-vision/>

⁹⁵ Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority, Paratransit. Available at: <https://maxtransit.org/paratransit/>

⁹⁶ City of Birmingham, Birmingham On-Demand powered by Via. Available at: <https://www.birminghamal.gov/via/>



Figure 18: Transit Routes and Bus Stops, Birmingham, 2019



Source: City of Birmingham, 2019

2. Public Works

The City of Birmingham’s Department of Public Works includes trash pickup and landfill management through the work of the Department of Public Works and water and sewage through Birmingham Water Works and local sewer providers, such as Jefferson County Office of Sewer Services, Hoover Sewer Services, Southwest Water Company or Alabama Utility Services, LLC.

Birmingham residents can dispose of waste at either City landfill free of charge. Landfill permits for commercial and non-resident use may be also be obtained. Meanwhile, local residential and commercial



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water rates are set annually by the Birmingham Water Works Board.⁹⁷ Such changes aim to meet regulatory and financial standards while meeting the goals of the citizen-focused five-year strategic plan. Meanwhile, sewer rates are set and determined by local sewer providers, such as Jefferson County Office of Sewer Services, Hoover Sewer Services, Southwest Water Company or Alabama Utility Services, LLC, and in compliance with regulatory and strategic planning requirements.⁹⁸

A review of these public works elements and feedback provided by community members and stakeholders determined no existing fair housing concerns related to these services.

3. Social Justice and Inclusion

The City of Birmingham's Office of Social Justice and Racial Equity, founded in 2019, advocates for equitable distribution of resources in the city through initiatives and activities aimed at bringing residents together to dialogue and provide greater access to city government and services. Among the top priorities of the office are cultural preservation, LGBTQ+ inclusion, a peaceful Birmingham, and by improving public health for residents.⁹⁹

With a vision of equity and meaningful civic engagement, the initiatives and activities promoted by the Office of Social Justice and Racial Equity also help to further fair housing goals by not only addressing community inequities but also improving access to opportunity and engagement for protected classes in the jurisdiction. In the long term, such interventions help to further understand potential barriers to fair housing for all residents.

D. Private Practices

In conjunction with public policies and practices, private sector policies also have to potential to further or deter fair housing goals. The following is a review of key private practices that may have some effect on fair housing choice and access in Birmingham.

1. Real Estate Practices

The Birmingham Association of Realtors (BAR) promotes professional and ethical real estate practices.¹⁰⁰ All members of the BAR are bound to follow the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Realtors, which specifically recognizes the significance of the Fair Housing Act.¹⁰¹ Moreover, the BAR has implemented a

⁹⁷ Birmingham Water Works Board of the City of Birmingham Rates, January 1, 2020. Available at: <https://www.bwwb.org/sites/default/files/docs/Birmingham%20Water%20Rates%202020.pdf>

⁹⁸ Birmingham Water Works, Sewer Rates. Available at: <https://www.bwwb.org/sewerrates>

⁹⁹ Office of Social Justice and Racial Equity, 2019 Annual Report. Available at: <https://www.birminghamal.gov/socialjustice>

¹⁰⁰ Birmingham Realtors Association. Available at: <http://www.birminghamrealtors.com/>

¹⁰¹ National Association of Realtors, Fair Housing Declaration. Available at: <https://www.nar.realtor/fair-housing/fair-housing-program/fair-housing-declaration>



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formal ethics complaint process that encourages residents and home seekers to file a potential grievance online.¹⁰²

During stakeholder interviews and public meetings, no fair housing concerns have been identified related to discriminatory real estate practices.

2. Advertising and Marketing

Under federal law, all making, printing and publishing of advertisements that indicate a preference, limitation or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin in housing are prohibited. Moreover, publishers, such as newspapers and directories, are also required to monitor persons and entities who place real estate advertisements in newspapers and on websites to ensure federal law compliance.¹⁰³

A review of newspapers and other publications, such as the Birmingham Business Journal, Birmingham News, Birmingham Times, Birmingham Weekly, and Latino News found no systematic limitation or discrimination due to race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin. Though concerns remain on the possible implicit exclusion of families with children and certain sources of income, no clear systematic red flags were found that will indicate a fair housing trend or patterns. Moreover, the City, in conjunction with the Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama, will continue to monitor instances of potential fair housing violations in the advertising or marketing of housing in the jurisdiction.

E. Other Local Policies

In addition to public and private policies already discussed in this chapter, there are other local policies to consider in assessing potential barriers to fair housing in Birmingham.

1. Property Taxes

The Fair Housing Act prohibits the consideration of the racial or ethnic composition of the surrounding neighborhood in arriving at appraised values of homes. However, the City of Birmingham conducts periodic reviews of assessment policies and procedures of the Jefferson and Shelby County tax assessors to ensure that changes do not disproportionately impact protected classes. The amount of a potential tax bill depends on two factors: assessed value of the property and tax rate, expressed as dollars per thousand, for each taxing entity in which property is located. This rate is set by the taxing entities such as state, county, municipalities, and school boards in whose jurisdictions the property lies.¹⁰⁴

Given the nature of the assessing process, some individual households may perceive property value changes as discriminatory. In such cases, property owners are allowed to document and submit a formal protest to the appropriate tax assessor to mitigate any potential impact.¹⁰⁵ In other cases, decades of discriminatory valuations, particularly in areas with concentrations of poverty or communities of color, may result in

¹⁰² Birmingham Realtors Association, Filing an Ethics Complaint. Available at: <http://www.birminghamrealtors.com/ethics-standards-support>

¹⁰³ HUD, Advertising and Marketing. Available at: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/advertising_and_marketing

¹⁰⁴ Jefferson County, AL Tax Assessor. Available at: <https://www.jccal.org/Default.asp?ID=1065&pg=FAQ#124>

¹⁰⁵ Jefferson County, AL, Protest Information. Available at: <https://www.jccal.org/Default.asp?ID=1959&pg=Protest+Information>



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undervaluing properties in the area. Though individual issues may remain, the City of Birmingham and surrounding counties continue to actively evaluate properties fairly and consistently to incentivize greater community development, social inclusion, and access to opportunity.

2. Titles and Vacancy

Birmingham's low-income and communities of color continue to face challenges and barriers to accessing and maintaining homeownership. These families are faced with a limited supply of capital to purchase or repair homes, low credit scores, and a convoluted foreclosure process. As such, it is common for former occupants to vacate a property because of the associated high costs or cumbersome nature of the foreclosure process, which results in the value of the home or property to be often low. In the context of Birmingham, actions to alleviate the declining rate of homeownership and rising vacancy have occurred through the creation of the Birmingham Land Bank Authority (BLBA).¹⁰⁶

The BLBA may acquire properties that have been delinquent for five years on back taxes, municipal liens, and other assessments. The Birmingham Land Bank Authority can acquire tax deeds to these properties and immediately file actions to clear titles, back taxes and municipal liens on these properties.

However, the cost and complexity in clearing titles are complicated and properties may sit vacant for far longer than anticipated. This back-log creates an oversupply of vacant and unoccupied units and the likelihood of spillover effects, such as declining home values for nearby properties and public safety concerns. The City of Birmingham is actively coordinating with BLBA and legal aid providers in the jurisdiction to do everything possible to clear murky titles and to incentivize greater investment in these properties.

¹⁰⁶ Birmingham Land Bank Authority, "Programs." Available at: <http://birminghamlandbank.org/programs/>



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XI. Program and Portfolio Analysis

This chapter reviews the demographics of participants and eligible participants of federally-funded housing programs within the city of Birmingham. Such a review helps to determine if available programs are adequately serving eligible persons. This analysis also examines areas where protected classes have limited options in the private housing market, as well as opportunities where Birmingham’s programs could expand these opportunities to further assist protected classes.

A. Federal Programs

In the 2019 fiscal year, the City of Birmingham received a total of \$9,048,042 from HUD for its housing programs. These programs included the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the Emergency Shelter Grants Program (ESG), the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program (HOPWA). A breakdown of the allocation for each program is provided in the table below.

Table 89: Birmingham, Alabama Housing Program HUD Awards and Allocations, 2019

Program	Amount
CDBG	\$5,870,169
ESG	\$499,041
HOME	\$1,313,336
HOPWA	\$1,365,496
Total	\$9,048,042

Source: HUD Exchange HUD Grantee Awards and Allocations, 2019

In the 2019 plan year (July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019), the City of Birmingham received a total of \$9,106,804. Based on the Birmingham 2018 Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER), in the fourth year of the city’s 2015-2020 Consolidated Plan (2018-2019), the City was able to achieve the following using the CDBG, ESG, HOME, and HOPWA programs.

- **Affordable Housing:** Housing assistance was provided to 165 homeowners.
- **Economic Development/Commercial Revitalization:** Technical assistance provided to 412 businesses throughout the City with a focus on Woodlawn, Ensley, and the 4th Avenue Business District. Nineteen jobs were created and/or retained.
- **HOPWA/Non-Homeless Special Needs Services:** AIDS Alabama assisted 515 households using HOPWA funds. There were 3,400 people assisted with non-homeless services such as legal assistance, child care, transportation, senior programs, educational assistance, etc.
- **Homelessness Prevention/Rapid Rehousing:** CDBG homeless service agencies assisted 2,957 people. A total of 6,615 people experiencing homelessness were assisted with ESG funding. Combining both funding sources 9,572 homeless persons were served in 2018.

Each program, its participants, and eligible activities are discussed below.

1. CDBG

As an entitlement community, the City of Birmingham receives CDBG funds annually as a grant to the City’s Department of Community Development, which administers the funds. Entitlement communities are



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comprised of central cities of Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs); metropolitan cities with populations of at least 50,000; and qualified urban counties with a population of 200,000 or more.¹⁰⁷ The CDBG program provides grant funds on a formula basis to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.¹⁰⁸

Projects funded by CDBG must meet one of three national objectives:

1. Benefit low-and-moderate-income persons
2. Aid in the prevention or elimination of slums and blight
3. Meet an urgent need

Based on the City of Birmingham's 2018 CAPER, the City uses its CDBG housing dollars primarily to assist low- to very-low-income homeowners for housing rehabilitation under the Critical Repair Grant Program. This program provides grants of up to \$15,000 to assist qualifying low- to moderate-income homeowners to enable repairs to critical building systems, including roofs, and HVAC systems.¹⁰⁹

The CDBG program permits a cap of 15 percent of budgeted funds for public service activities. Public service activities are those concerned with employment, crime prevention, child care, health drug abuse treatment, education, fair housing counseling, energy conservation, and others. In 2018, the City of Birmingham committed 11.3 percent of its CDBG funding to Public Service activities, which included support of programs for the homeless, employment and housing assistance, children/youth development programs, senior citizen programs, and programs for those with special needs.

a) Program Resources

CDBG funds for the 2018-2019 plan year totaled \$5,881,301. According to HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development, of the total grant awarded to Birmingham, 43.6 percent was allocated to housing, 20.6 percent to administration and planning, 14.8 percent to public services, 8.5 percent to public improvements, and 4.7 percent was allocated to economic development.

¹⁰⁷ [Hud.gov, Community Planning and Development, Community Development Block Grant Program](#)

¹⁰⁸ [HUD.Gov, Community Planning and Development, Community Development Block Grant Program](#)

¹⁰⁹ City of Birmingham 2018 CAPER



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Table 90: City of Birmingham CDBG Program Funding, 2018

Activity	Disbursement	Percent of Total Funding Allocation
Total CDBG Entitlement Grant	\$5,881,301	100.0%
Housing	\$1,972,556	43.6%
Admin/Planning	\$932,849	20.6%
Public Services	\$670,196	14.8%
Public Improvements	\$382,453	8.5%
Economic Development	\$214,644	4.7%
Total	\$4,172,697	92.2%

Source: [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Community Planning and Development CPD Cross Program Funding Matrix](#)

b) Program Participants

As stated in the City’s 2018 CAPER, only owner-occupied housing was assisted with CDBG funds and households earning 50 percent of median income or below were considered a priority. Combined, CDBG programs assisted a total of 199 households; 134 were extremely low-income, 57 were low-income, and 8 were moderate-income households.¹¹⁰

The City’s Critical Repair Program focuses on assisting residents with disabilities and those households with income at or below 30 percent AMI. The program targets households that are 30 percent or below HUD’s income limits and/or are disabled. In 2018, this program served 82 households, 75 of which were extremely low-income.¹¹¹

People with disabilities are also assisted through CDBG-funded public service partners, such as the Disability Rights and Resources Agency. This agency provides home modifications for people with disabilities, such as installing stair chairs, building ramps, bathroom modifications, door widening, etc. Through this agency, 33 households were assisted in 2018.¹¹²

c) Race and Ethnicity

According to the City of Birmingham’s 2018 CAPER, CDBG funding alone assisted 51.3 percent or 7,150 out of 13,929 families that were assisted using CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA funds. The majority of families assisted were Black or African American, consistent with the proportion of Black or Africans that resided in the City of Birmingham (71.6 percent in 2017).¹¹³ Two percent of families (a total of 211 families) assisted were Hispanic, however, most families assisted were Non-Hispanic.

2. ESG

The ESG program focuses on assisting people to quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis and/or homelessness. Overall, the ESG program provides funding to:

1. Engage homeless individuals and families living on the street.
2. Improve the number and quality of emergency shelters for homeless individuals and families.

¹¹⁰ City of Birmingham 2018 CAPER

¹¹¹ City of Birmingham 2018 CAPER

¹¹² City of Birmingham 2018 CAPER

¹¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates



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3. Help operate these shelters.
4. Provide essential services to shelter residents.
5. Rapidly re-house homeless individuals and families.
6. Prevent families and individuals from becoming homeless.

ESG funds may be used for five program components:

- Street outreach
- Emergency shelter
- Homelessness prevention
- Rapid rehousing assistance
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

Additionally, up to 7.5 percent of a recipient’s allocation can be used for administrative activities. Eligible recipients for ESG generally consist of metropolitan cities, urban counties, territories, and states.

In the 2018 plan year, the City of Birmingham received \$481,528 in ESG funding and \$499,041 in 2019. One of the City’s priorities is providing emergency shelter, support, and services for people experiencing homelessness. Through its efforts and coordination, there were 54,385 bed nights available for people experiencing homelessness, and a total of 53,896 bed nights provided that were ESG-funded, with a 99 percent rate of utilization. Further, the City provides ESG funds to several agencies to assist homeless people and prevent homelessness through rapid rehousing and homelessness prevention activities. Collectively, these agencies served 230 households in 2018.

a) Program Resources

Activities undertaken by the City of Birmingham using ESG funds to accommodate homeless persons include assisting nonprofit and/or public providers of transitional housing in expanding their capacity and supporting homeless service provider agencies that provide street outreach as a part of their program activities.

b) Program Participants

For the plan year 2018, ESG funds assisted a total of 3,200 persons through homeless prevention, rapid-rehousing, shelter, and street outreach activities. A breakdown of each program and the number of persons assisted is provided in the table below.

Table 91: ESG Participants, Birmingham, 2018

Activity	Number of Persons in Households
Homelessness Prevention	71
Rapid Re-Housing	85
Shelter	2,314
Street Outreach	60
Total for all persons served with ESG	3,200*

Source: City of Birmingham, 2018 CAPER

*Note: Total persons served with ESG: 2,786 adults, 394 Children, 0 Don't know/refused/other, 20 missing information



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c) Special Populations

For the 2018 plan year, 1,513 persons considered to be members of special populations were assisted through the City of Birmingham’s ESG funds. Most persons, 1,449 were assisted through emergency shelters, while eight persons were assisted through homeless prevention efforts, and 47 persons were assisted through rapid re-housing. Of persons assisted through emergency shelter, 35.1 percent were chronically homeless, 34.9 percent were survivors of domestic violence, 13.2 percent were elderly, 12.2 percent were veterans, and 4.6 percent were people living with HIV/AIDS.

Table 92: Number of Persons in Households for Special Populations Served, Birmingham, 2018

Subpopulation	Total	Homelessness Prevention	Rapid Re-Housing	Emergency Shelters
Veterans	178	0	2	177
Victims of Domestic Violence	524	5	13	505
Elderly	195	0	1	191
HIV/AIDS	71	3	1	67
Chronically Homeless	545	0	30	509
Total	1,513	8	47	1,449

Source: City of Birmingham 2018 CAPER

Persons with disabilities were another significant population served through ESG funding; 2,737 persons were served in the 2018 plan year. Emergency shelter was the primary assistance provided to these individuals, assisting 2,652 persons (97 percent) of total persons with disabilities, while rapid re-housing assisted 43 persons (1.6 percent), and homeless prevention assisted 16 persons (0.6 percent).

The majority of persons served through all ESG programs had some other disability, which was not classified, comprising 36.8 percent, while 33.2 percent were severely mentally ill, and 29.9 percent had chronic substance abuse issues.

Table 93: Persons with Disabilities for Special Populations Served, Birmingham, 2018

Persons with Disabilities	Total	Homelessness Prevention	Rapid Re-Housing	Emergency Shelters
Severely Mentally Ill	910	2	16	882
Chronic Substance Abuse	819	2	7	804
Other Disability	1,008	12	20	966
Total (Unduplicated if possible)	2,737	16	43	2,652

Source: City of Birmingham 2018 CAPER

3. HOME

The HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) provides formula grants to states and localities to fund a wide range of activities, including building, buying and/or rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or homeownership or providing direct rental assistance to low-income people. HOME funds are awarded



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annually as formula grants, direct loans, loan guarantees or other forms of credit enhancements, or rental assistance or security deposits.¹¹⁴

Eligible activities using home funds to provide home purchase or rehabilitation financing assistance to eligible homeowners and new homebuyers include building or rehabilitating housing for rent or ownership or for other reasonable and necessary expenses related to the development of non-luxury housing.

The City of Birmingham received \$1,499,847 in HOME funding in the 2018 program year and \$1,313,336 in 2019. According to the HOME Dashboard Report produced by HUD, the City of Birmingham has received a total of \$52,995,555 in HOME funding as of June 2019. Of these funds, 58 percent was used for rental projects and 42 percent was used for homebuyer programs. Birmingham has not undertaken any homeowner rehabilitation projects.¹¹⁵ The demographics of these program beneficiaries are described in the following section.

a) Program Participants

The 2018 CAPER examines the racial and ethnic composition of households supported by the HOME program. As the table below shows, Black or African American families received the most assistance through the HOME program’s projects; 88.7 percent of rental projects and 95.6 percent of homebuyer projects. White families comprised 7.7 percent of rental projects and 3 percent of homebuyer projects. All other races and ethnicities each comprised less than 1 percent of both program beneficiaries.

Table 94: Racial and Ethnic Composition of Families Assisted by HOME Program, cumulative as of September 2019

Race/Ethnicity of Family	Rental Projects	Homebuyer Projects
White	7.7%	3.0%
Black or African American	88.7%	95.6%
Asian	0.0%	0.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%
American Indian or American Native	0.0%	0.1%
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%
Hispanic	0.8%	0.0%
Other	0.4%	0.3%

Source: HOME Program, Program Progress Dashboard-Production Detail Racial/Ethnic Breakout, June 2019

The tables below, based on data provided through HUD’s HOME Dashboard, provide additional details into the composition of HOME program participants. For example, as the table below highlights, about 40 percent of renters who received help from the program had incomes below 30 percent of the Area’s Median Income.

¹¹⁴ HUD.GOV, Community Planning and Development, HOME Investment Partnerships Program

¹¹⁵ [HOME Investment Partnerships \(HOME\) Program, Program Progress Dashboard, Cumulative as of 6/30/2019](#)



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Table 95: Income Range by HOME Program, cumulative, as of September 2019

	Rental	Homebuyer	Homeowner
Household Median Income	Percent	Percent	Percent
61-80% AMI	5%	25%	0%
51-60% AMI	10%	30%	0%
31-50% AMI	45%	35%	0%
< 30% AMI	40%	10%	0%

Source: HOME Program, Program Progress Dashboard, September 2019. Full report available at https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/HOME_Snap_PJ_Snapshot_BIRM-AL_AL_20190930.pdf.

Moreover, as the table below shows, about 70 percent of renters assisted were one-person households, while the family composition was more diverse among owner households.

Table 96: Family/Size by HOME Program, cumulative, as of September 2019

	Rental	Homebuyer	Homeowner
Household Size	Percent	Percent	Percent
1-person	71.3%	20.3%	0.0%
2-person	14.2%	29.7%	0.0%
3-person	10.0%	28.3%	0.0%
4-person	2.5%	14.2%	0.0%
5-person	1.4%	5.0%	0.0%
6-person	0.6%	1.5%	0.0%
7-person	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%
8 or more persons	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%

Source: HOME Program, Program Progress Dashboard, September 2019. Note: Homebuyer total does not equal 100 percent due to rounding. Full report available at https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/HOME_Snap_PJ_Snapshot_BIRM-AL_AL_20190930.pdf.

Lastly, according to the report, the elderly and single-parents are the households most widely represented in the program. Such additional details help to underscore the efforts the City of Birmingham has made to further fair housing goals in the jurisdiction, particularly by providing greater access to housing to more vulnerable populations and protected classes.

Table 97: Household Type by HOME Program, cumulative, as of September 2019

	Rental	Homebuyer	Homeowner
Household Type	Percent	Percent	Percent
Single/Non-Elderly	32.5%	23.8%	0.0%
Elderly	45.0%	4.7%	0.0%
Related/Single Parent	16.2%	53.6%	0.0%
Related/Two Parent	3.7%	12.4%	0.0%
Other	2.1%	5.0%	0.0%

Source: HOME Program, Program Progress Dashboard, September 2019. Note: Totals do not equal 100 percent due to rounding. Full report available at https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/HOME_Snap_PJ_Snapshot_BIRM-AL_AL_20190930.pdf.



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4. HOPWA

The City of Birmingham serves as the Grantee of HOPWA funds and AIDS Alabama serves as the Project Sponsor. AIDS Alabama uses HOPWA funding for rental assistance, supportive services including case management and transportation, and continued operation of existing units.

Between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019, AIDS Alabama provided supportive services to 515 unduplicated individuals. Homeless prevention services were provided to 163 unduplicated households in the form of:

- Short-Term Mortgage Rental and Utility Assistance (STRMU)
- Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)
- Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA)

B. Other Local Initiatives

In addition to the federally-funded programs and activities outlined in the previous section, the City of Birmingham has also undertaken its own local initiatives aimed at addressing housing access and fair housing issues. Such initiatives are outlined in the following section.

1. Disaster Recovery

On April 27, 2011, a devastating tornado hit the Pratt community of Birmingham. As part of the efforts to recover from such disaster, the City, through CDBG-Disaster Recovery funds, invested in several projects focused on resilient infrastructure and better quality of life for the residents. As a result of such efforts, the Pratt Library was reconstructed and now serves as a social and digital hub for the neighborhood. Moreover, a new Fire Station was constructed to better serve the Pratt community. Overall, over 60 housing units were constructed, while another 84 units are still under construction.

2. Strategic Plan Update

As part of Mayor Randall L. Woodfin's 2018 update to the Strategic Plan for the City of Birmingham, goals such as safe, secure, and sustainable communities and healthy, thriving, and diverse neighborhoods were engraved into the future of fair housing and access of the City. Targeted activities such as an assessment of the city's code enforcement, the development, and adoption of Neighborhood Revitalization Plans, partnerships with community-minded organizations to address transit, equity, poverty, affordable housing, and homelessness should help further fair housing goals in the jurisdiction. Moreover, the establishment of the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice will enable the city to tackle the potential impediments outlined in this document now and into the future.¹¹⁶

C. Publicly Supported Housing

As previously discussed in this assessment, the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District (HABD) is the quasi-government public housing agency that administers the City's public housing with a focus on reducing high concentrations of poverty, developing open and green space, and creating mixed-income communities. The HABD participates in several public housing programs, which include Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), traditional Public Housing, Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) and Project-Based Section 8.

¹¹⁶ "The Big: Picture. An Update on Birmingham's Strategic Plan." City of Birmingham, 2018. <https://www.birminghamal.gov/strategy>



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HABD also operates a HUD-approved Lease-Purchase Homeownership Program. The Lease-Purchase Homeownership Program is designed to provide affordable homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income families. This program allows eligible first-time homeowners to use voucher subsidies to meet monthly homeownership expenses.¹¹⁷

Within the City of Birmingham, there are 11,976 publicly-supported housing units. Most publicly supported housing units are in the form of traditional public housing, which provide approximately 5,000 housing units, followed by HCV, which provides 4,451 housing units. Project-Based Section 8 also provides a significant amount of supported housing, supplying approximately 2,099 housing units, while Other Multifamily housing provides approximately 312 housing units.

Table 98: Publicly Supported Housing, Birmingham, 2018

Housing Type	Number of Units	Percent of Public Housing Units
Public Housing	5,114	4.7%
Project-Based Section 8	2,099	2.0%
Other Multifamily	312	0.3%
Housing Choice Voucher Program	4,451	4.1%
Total	11,976	(X)

Source: Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Table 0004a, released February 2018

The race and ethnicity of households in publicly-supported housing units based on figures published by HUD in February 2018 are shown in the table below. In Birmingham, residents of publicly-supported housing are largely Black or African American. Black or African American households comprise 97 percent of public housing, 82 percent of Project-Based Section 8 Rental Assistance (PBRA), 78 percent of Other Multifamily housing, and 97 percent of Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV). In comparison to public housing and HCV, White households are more likely to live in PBRA (17.6 percent) and Other Multifamily housing (21 percent), which include LIHTC and other forms of publicly-assisted multifamily housing.

Table 99: Publicly Supported Households by Race/Ethnicity, HABD

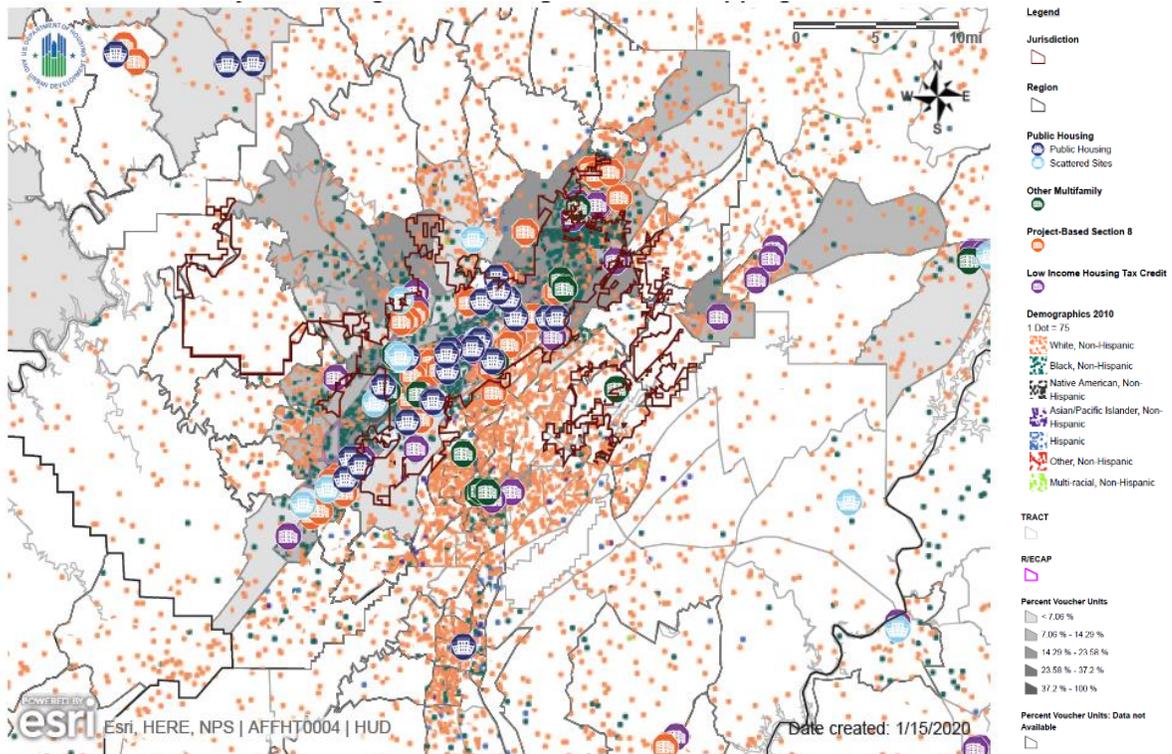
Housing Type	White		Black or African American		Hispanic or Latino		Asian or Pacific Islander	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Public Housing	48	1.0%	4,515	96.9%	96	2.1%	0	0.0%
Project-Based Section 8	364	17.6%	1,687	81.7%	12	0.6%	1	0.1%
Other Multifamily	61	20.9%	228	78.1%	1	0.3%	1	0.3%
Housing Choice Voucher Program	61	1.5%	3,984	96.8%	68	1.7%	1	0.0%

Source: Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Table 0004a, released February 2018

¹¹⁷ Housing Authority of the Birmingham District, "About Us", <https://habd.org/about-habd/>



Figure 19: Location of Supported Housing, City of Birmingham, 2017



Source: Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Mapping Tool – Map 5- Publicly Supported Housing and Race and Ethnicity

D. Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)

As previously explored in this assessment, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program provides states and local agencies and jurisdictions nearly \$8 billion in annual budget authority to issue tax credits for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of rental housing targeted to lower-income households.¹¹⁸ Nationwide, an average of over 1,411 projects and 107,000 units are placed in service through the program, which helps to provide access to safe and adequate housing to low-income families. Based on figures published through HUD’s LIHTC Database, since 2006 about 684 low-income units have constructed through the LIHTC program in Birmingham. The majority of those units, 454, are two- and three-bedroom units, thus serving the potential needs of low-income families in the jurisdiction. The table and map below present the breakdown of such projects and their location within Birmingham.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸Low-Income Tax Credit Properties, HUD, 2019. Available at: <https://hudgis-hud.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/low-income-housing-tax-credit-properties>

¹¹⁹ Low-Income Tax Credit Database, HUD, 2019. Available at: <https://lihtc.huduser.gov/>



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Table 100: LIHTC Projects, Birmingham, 2006-2015

Project Name	Total Number of Units	Total Low-Income Units	Number of 1 Bedroom Units	Number of 2 Bedroom Units	Number of 3 Bedroom Units	Number of 4 Bedroom Units	Credit Allocation Year
Highgate Apartments	200	200	16	120	56	8	2006
Tuxedo Terrace Phase I	112	112	32	48	28	4	2007
Glenbrook At Oxmoor Valley Phase I	100	100	20	60	20	0	2007
Tuxedo Terrace Phase II	108	108	8	24	70	6	2008
Cherry Ridge Village Apartments	56	56	28	28	0	0	2012
Highland Manor	0	108	0	0	0	0	2015

Source: HUD, LIHTC Database, 2019

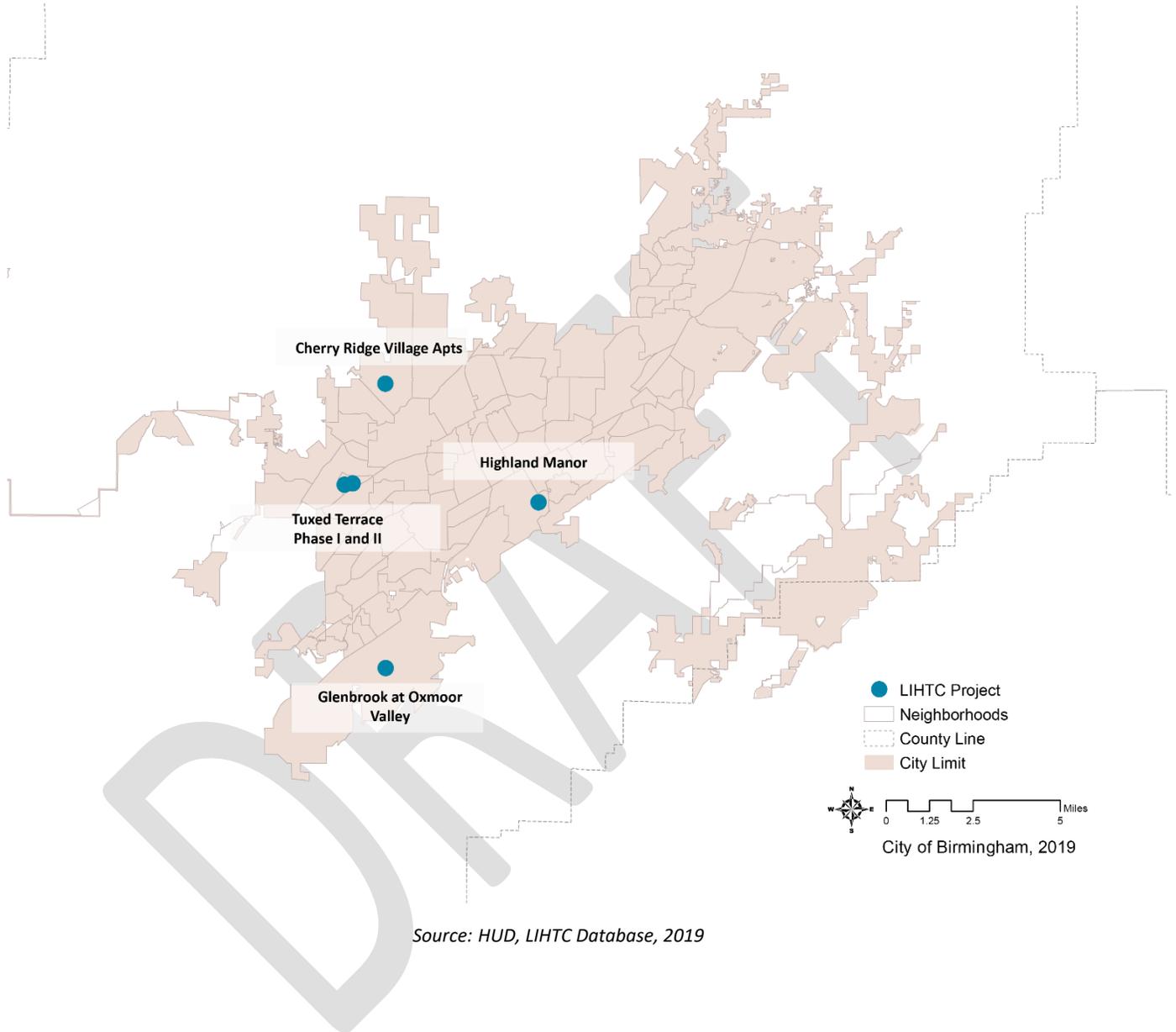
The 684 low-income units created through the LIHTC program have provided greater opportunities for low-income households and protected classes, particularly families, in the jurisdiction to access adequate and affordable housing.



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Figure 20: LIHTC Projects, Birmingham, 2006-2015





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XII. Fair Housing Trends and Complaints

Understanding fair housing trends and complaints is critical in assessing housing access free from discrimination. This chapter reviews the fair housing enforcement process and fair housing complaints filed at the local and federal levels to assess trends, emerging issues, and potential barriers to fair housing access, enforcement, and education in the context of Birmingham.

A. HUD Complaint and Investigation Process

According to the HUD Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO), HUD FHEO begins its complaint investigation process shortly after receiving a complaint. Under the Fair Housing Act, complaints must be filed within one year of the last date of the alleged discrimination. Generally, FHEO will either investigate the complaint or refer the complaint to another agency to investigate.

When FHEO investigates the complaint, it will make efforts to help the parties reach an agreement. If the complaint cannot be resolved voluntarily by an agreement, FHEO may issue findings from the investigation. HUD will notify the parties about the results of its investigation in a Letter of Findings. The letter will include information about the facts found during the investigation and whether HUD found non-compliance with fair housing and civil rights laws. If the investigation shows that the law has been violated, HUD or the Department of Justice may take legal action to enforce the law.

Depending on the type of complaint filed, FHEO may follow a different investigative process, such as referring the matter to a Fair Housing Assistance Program partner.¹²⁰ If HUD determines there is reasonable cause for discrimination, then HUD will issue a Determination of Reasonable Cause and a Charge of Discrimination.

1. Intake

When an individual reports possible discrimination, FHEO checks whether a formal complaint can be filed under one of the laws it enforces. FHEO may conduct an interview with the individual who wishes to file the complaint. Where appropriate, FHEO will draft a formal complaint and have the individual review and sign the complaint and notify the parties that a complaint has been filed. In certain circumstances, FHEO may initiate a compliance review based on the information submitted in a complaint. As part of HUD's Fair Housing Assistance Program, FHEO may refer a fair housing complaint to a state or local government agency for investigation. The Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama is the regional agency for filing complaints of fair housing for the City of Birmingham.

2. Investigation

Allegations are investigated by FHEO after a formal complaint is filed. HUD assigns investigators to investigate the allegations made in the complaint. An investigator may require more information such as the timeline of events, location, persons present at the time of the event, as well as relevant documentation to add to the complaint. HUD will also provide these materials to whom the complaint has been filed. HUD may also gather evidence through various methods such as interviewing parties and witnesses, reviewing documents and site visits. Once the investigation is complete, FHEO will send out a written report if its findings.

¹²⁰ [Department of Housing and Urban Development, Program Offices, FHEO Complaint and Investigation Process](#)



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3. Conciliation or Voluntary Compliance

At any time during the investigation process, the parties may resolve the complaint under terms that are satisfactory to the parties and HUD will try to resolve the complaint through an agreement. If parties accept an agreement, then HUD will close the investigation and monitor compliance with the agreement. Depending on the authorities that apply to the complaint, HUD may resolve the investigation through a document called a Conciliation Agreement, a Voluntary Compliance Agreement, or both.

4. Legal Action

Appropriate actions to enforce the law may be applied. The government may bring a Fair Housing Act or other civil rights cases based on the findings of HUD investigations with examples of the relief sought in support include compensation for victims, changes to policies and procedures, and training. The government does not charge any fees or costs to individuals who are alleging discrimination when it brings legal action. The cases brought before HUD Administrative Law Judges are handled by HUD's Office of General Counsel, and cases in the federal courts are handles by the U.S Department of Justice.

a) Filing a Complaint with the Local Fair Housing Agency

A complaint is filed with a local fair housing agency by providing a short description of the alleged violation. Once the complaint is filed it will be investigated to determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that a fair housing law was violated. If it is determined to be a violation, then it is filed jointly with HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity for investigation. The local fair housing agency will then attempt to reach an agreement with the parties. A conciliation agreement to protect both complaint and the public interest may be executed. If an agreement is signed, the local fair housing agency will take no further action and the case is closed. The final investigation report will be submitted to the City Attorney's Office for determination.

B. Fair Housing Complaints Filed with HUD

Complaints filed with HUD are classified by race, national origin, disability, familial status, religion, sex and retaliation bases. FHEO investigates complaints which may be of one or both of the following types:

- Discrimination under the Fair Housing Act (including housing that is privately owned and operated)
- Discrimination and other civil rights violations in housing and community development programs, including those funded by HUD.

Complaints involving discrimination under the Fair Housing Act may be applied in cases where one's discrimination in renting or buying a home, getting a mortgage, seeking housing assistance, or engaging in other housing-related activities are violated. The filing of these complaints may be against property owners, property managers, developers, real estate agents, mortgage lenders, homeowner associations, insurance providers, and others who affect housing opportunities.

Complaints involving discrimination in housing and community development programs may be based on the violation of rights because of discrimination and other violations of civil rights in HUD programs. For example, the failure to ensure meaningful access by persons with limited English proficiency. Applicable laws include:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, national origin)
- Section 109 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974



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- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (disability)
- Title II of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Architectural Barriers Act of 1968
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975
- Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972

Complaints may be filed against any recipient or sub-recipient of HUD financial assistance, including states, local governments, and private entities operating housing and community development and other types of services, programs, or activities.

From 2006 to 2016, the period for which data was available for this assessment, Jefferson and Shelby Counties recorded 173 complaints filed with FHEO. Most of those cases, 153, were filed in Jefferson County. Shelby County recorded 20 cases filed during the same period.

Table 101: Total Cases Filed with HUD FHEO, Jefferson and Shelby County, 2006-2016

County	Number of Cases
Jefferson	153
Shelby	20
Total	173

Source: HUD FHEO Filed Cases, 2019, <https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/fheo-filed-cases>.

As previously mentioned, cases to FHEO can be filed based on one or several reasons. As the table below highlights, most of those cases (103) were filed on the basis of race, followed by disability (68 cases). The height of the number of cases occurred in 2008 and 2009 during the recent Great Recession. Since 2008, the number of cases has significantly dropped in the counties. Though many factors may contribute to such change, such as better housing conditions since 2008, the slight increase in cases filed in 2016 indicates that the recent volatility of housing issues in the jurisdiction may require continued monitoring and public education regarding fair housing rights and the grievance process.



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Table 102: Cases Filed with HUD FHEO by Bases, Jefferson and Shelby Counties, 2006-2016

Year	Race	Color	National Origin	Hispanic National Origin	Disability	Familial Status	Religion	Sex	Retaliation	Total
2006	9	0	2	1	5	4	0	3	1	25
2007	16	0	1	1	8	2	0	4	0	32
2008	23	2	1	0	12	5	0	14	0	57
2009	17	3	4	2	12	4	0	6	0	48
2010	10	0	1	1	7	3	0	8	0	30
2011	6	1	1	0	4	1	1	0	0	14
2012	2	0	1	1	3	2	0	0	2	11
2013	4	0	1	0	5	1	1	3	2	17
2014	4	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	2	11
2015	7	0		0	2	0	0	1	0	10
2016	5	0	1	1	6	2	0	2	0	17
Total	103	6	14	7	68	24	2	41	7	272

Source: HUD FHEO Filed Cases, 2019, <https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/fheo-filed-cases>. Note: Cases may have multiple bases, as such, the total presented is higher than the 173 actual cases filed.

C. Local Fair Housing Complaints

Overall, the Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama received a growing number of complaints for the area over the past three years, with a majority of complaints based on landlord/tenant discrimination, as shown in the tables below for 2016 to 2018. Local complaints filed with the Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama are certified by HUD as “substantially equivalent” to those under the federal FHA.

In 2018, as the table below highlights, the most common type of complaint in Northern Alabama was landlord/tenant based with 29 complaints, while complaints based on race followed with 11 complaints. Most complaints filed were done so by a female head of household (41 out of the 55 complaints). Most households who filed a complaint were Black or African American (32 out of 55 complaints), followed by Hispanic households with 10 out of 55 complaints.



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Table 103: Fair Housing Complaints, Northern Alabama, 2018

Complaints	Number
# Male Head of Household	14
# Female Head of Household	41
# Low to Moderate Income	37
# Middle-Class Income	18
# Number African American	32
# Number Whites	9
# Hispanics	10
# Multi-Race	4
# Adults	73
#Children	56
Total Served	129
Type of Complaints	
Race (R)	11
National Origin (NO)	7
Reasonable Accommodations (RA)	8
Landlord/Tenant (LL/T)	29
Total Number of Complaints	55

Source: Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama, 2018

Data from 2017 reveals an overall decrease in complaints, with 51 complaints filed in 2017 and 55 complaints filed in 2018. However, as the table below highlights, the number of complaints based on reasonable accommodations (14) was higher in 2017 than in 2018 (8). Moreover, mortgage lending issues were among the top four reasons for a complaint in 2017, while that was not the case in 2018. Complaints filed by female heads of households and African Americans were the majority of complaints filed in both 2017 and 2018.



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Table 104: Fair Housing Complaints, Northern Alabama, 2017

Complaints	Number
# Male Head of Household	15
# Female Head of Household	36
# Low to Moderate Income	34
# Middle-Class Income	17
# Number African American	33
# Number Whites	9
# Hispanics	9
# Multi-Race	0
# Adults	73
#Children	46
Total Served	119
Type of Complaints	
Race (R)	11
National Origin (NO)	0
Reasonable Accommodations (RA)	14
Mortgage Lending	2
Landlord/Tenant (LL/T)	24
Total Number of Complaints	51

Source: Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama, 2017

2016 marked the highest number of complaints received in the three years between 2016 and 2018, with 66 complaints filed. Landlord/tenant complaints were the most frequently filed complaints (59), followed by complaints based on reasonable accommodation (5). Across all complaints filed, as with 2018 and 2017, the majority were filed by female head of households (50). African American households (51) and households identified as low- to moderate-income (49) were also among prominent household characteristics for those who filed a complaint in 2016. It is worth noting that, as the table below highlights, 2016 was the only year in which complaints filed by Chinese households were tracked with one complaint recorded. Furthermore, complaints based on sex or gender were among the top complaints for the year, unlike 2018 and 2017, thus highlighting the complexities of fair housing enforcement in the context of Birmingham and the region.



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Table 105: Fair Housing Complaints, Northern Alabama, 2016

Complaints	Number
# Male Head of Household	16
# Female Head of Household	50
# Low to Moderate Income	49
# # Middle-Class Income	17
# Number African American Filed Complaint	51
# Number Whites Filed Complaint	9
# Hispanics Filed Complaint	3
# Chinese Filed Complaint	1
# Others Filed Complaint	2
# Adults	79
#Children	55
Total Served	134
Type of Complaints	
Race (R)	1
Sex/Gender	1
Reasonable Accommodations (RA)	5
Landlord/Tenant (LL/T)	59
Total Number of Complaints	66

Source: Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama, 2016

D. Complaint Trends

Over the ten years from 2006 to 2016 both Shelby and Jefferson county filed a total of 173 cases with HUD. Complaints by type were most commonly made on the basis of race, followed by sex and disability over the same ten-year period, as seen in the table below. As previously mentioned, at the county level, complaints reached their highest numbers between 2008 to 2010. Since 2010, the overall numbers have steadily decreased.

Table 106: Fair Housing Complaints by Basis, Birmingham, 2006-2016

Year	Number of Cases
2006	16
2007	21
2008	36
2009	27
2010	20
2011	9
2012	7
2013	9
2014	8
2015	10
2016	10
Total	173

Source: HUD FHEO Filed Cases, 2019, <https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/fheo-filed-cases>.



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Overall, local complaint trends reveal that while complaints may be decreasing, the profile of those impacted by fair housing issues has remained the same. Households that are mostly female-headed, low-income, and majority African American remain more likely to file a fair housing complaint. Beyond the characteristics of who files a complaint, the nature of issues has also stayed the same. In 2016, for example, there was a significantly large number of complaints base on tenant and landlord issues that was an issue until 2018. Moreover, complaints based on race and reasonable accommodation were common types of complaints filed at the local level and directly with HUD, those highlighting the consistency of these issues for residents. Interviews with stakeholders and the survey conducted for this assessment highlighted such consistency and the ongoing need to address the root causes of the fair housing issues.

While outreach and education efforts to inform the public on fair housing protections have resulted in significant progress for Birmingham, more will need to be done in the next five years to ensure that recent fair housing trends are curbed or eliminated and that all residents are provided fair housing choice and access.

DRAFT



XIII. Review of Prior and Current Actions Taken to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing

A. Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

Affirmatively furthering fair housing requires overcoming historic patterns of segregation, promoting fair housing choice, and fostering an inclusive community. Identifying Birmingham’s barriers to fair housing calls for the development of comprehensive strategies and timely actions to overcome existing impediments. The Analysis of Impediments assesses previous actions taken and current conditions that may continue to restrict housing choice for people protected under State and federal fair housing laws.

With such an assessment in mind, this section presents the previously identified impediments to fair housing choice and a summary of the actions taken to address those challenges. The analysis and its results will help outline the underlying conditions and trends still relevant in Birmingham.

B. Previous Impediments to Fair Housing Choice.

The previously identified impediments to fair housing choice of Birmingham are listed below. The impediments identified are not listed in any order or priority. The analysis and status of these impediments are based on the data available at the time and the feedback provided by community members and stakeholders. An analysis of past and existing trends is further addressed in other sections of this document.

Table 107: Previous Impediments to Fair Housing

Impediment	Description
Impediment #1: Environmental Justice	Several low-income, minority neighborhoods are located on or near an environmentally hazardous site, spurring Environmental Justice concerns and poor housing conditions.
Impediment #2: Income Disparity	Discriminatory income disparities lead to inability to obtain living wage jobs to support obtainment of livable, affordable housing.
Impediment #3: Access to Transportation	A lack of access to transportation decreases ability for LMI residents to obtain living-wage jobs.
Impediment #4: Homeowner Insurance Discrimination	Potential Protected Class Discrimination in securing Homeowner’s Insurance.

Source: Birmingham Analysis of Impediments, 2015, Updated 2017

As presented in the 2015 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, the barriers identified in 2015 provided the City of Birmingham a path forward in furthering fair housing protections in the jurisdiction. The following are detailed descriptions of the impediments as presented in the 2015 Analysis of Impediments assessment:



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- **Impediment #1:** Several low-income, minority neighborhoods are located on or near an environmentally hazardous site, spurring Environmental Justice concerns and poor housing conditions.

Birmingham was once an industrial city. The effects of a post-industrial economy directly affected the low-income and minority residents that have continued to live in the under-resourced communities and poor housing stock. Common to post-industrial cities is the concentration of environmental injustices exacerbated over time from the presence of environmental hazards coupled with racially constructed policies that further limited access to clean, safe, and affordable housing choice.

- **Impediment #2:** Discriminatory income disparities lead to inability to obtain living wage jobs to support obtainment of livable, affordable housing.

Disparate impact on protected classes within Birmingham has violated Fair Housing Law. The refusal of Section 8 and other rent subsidies from single mothers with children, minorities, persons with disabilities, or members of other protected classes continue to persist.

- **Impediment #3:** A lack of access to transportation decreases ability for LMI residents to obtain living-wage jobs.

Continued access to transportation, especially for low wage workers is an impediment to fair housing choice. The relation between the location of housing and employment have direct effects on affordability. An existing high unemployment rate has added to the impediment as well.

- **Impediment #4:** Potential Protected Class Discrimination in securing Homeowner's Insurance.

The high incidence of mortgage denials in the city has a correlation between home mortgage lending and homeowner's insurance.

C. Actions Taken

In addition to the impediments noted in 2015, a set of actions were also presented to mitigate the impact of the identified barriers. A sample of some of the actions is listed in the table below.



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Table 108: Actions Taken for Previous Impediments

Impediments	Actions Taken
Impediment #1: Environmental Justice	The Community Development Department continues to work with the EPA in order to obtain grant funding to remediate potentially hazardous areas/brownfields and to develop environmental standards regarding residential areas while conducting community education surveys, outreach and continued observation of affected communities.
Impediment #2: Income Disparity	The City of Birmingham and the Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama and the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District collaborated to increase its public information, training, workshops and other outreach activities to explain fair housing issues to landlords and encourage tenants to report discrimination.
Impediment #3: Access to Transportation	The City of Birmingham will take an active role in monitoring the link between adequate employment access and that of adequate transportation in conjunction with working with the Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority.
Impediment #4: Homeowner Insurance Discrimination	The City of Birmingham will continue to fund its community improvement programs in targeted low-income neighborhoods to improve public infrastructure and public spaces in these areas. The city will continue the analysis of property values and credit scores to show both the need and the community's ability to support the cost of legitimate, affordable homeowner insurance.

Source: 2018 CAPER, City of Birmingham

Actions related to fair housing education and enforcement taken by the Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama, as identified for Birmingham, are reported to HUD in Annual Reports submitted as part of the Consolidated Plan Process. Assessing the status of these actions helps to inform the current trends that may continue to limit fair housing choice in Birmingham.

D. Other Actions and Plans

In addition to the direct actions previously outlined. The City of Birmingham has also undertaken an array of actions to address the direct and indirect impact of the impediments presented in 2015 and updated in 2017. These actions are taken from the neighborhood-specific framework plans and other strategic planning efforts as listed below:

1. Northside Southside Framework

Action 1: Utilize a place-based approach to public and private investment in the Northside Southside area. Examples of such approach include:¹²¹

- High Growth – support the development of affordable and supportive housing, active code enforcement, and target demolitions. Target communities of Five points South and Central City.
- Transitional – balance market-rate housing with subsidized housing, rehabilitate vacant units and provide sources for home rehabilitation within the Glen Iris and Southside neighborhoods.
- Distressed - Preserve housing stock, encourage, transformational projects, build off existing neighborhood assets. Targeting the Norwood neighborhood.

¹²¹ Northside and Southside Framework.

https://www.imaginebham.com/uploads/1/4/4/7/14479416/nsfp_frameworkplan_20190919.pdf



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- High Vacancy - Land banking, demolish blight, partner, with neighborhood anchors, invest in access and social programs. Targeted neighborhoods include Evergreen, Druid Hills and Fountain Heights.

Action 2: Implement Future Land Use Map/Plan to allow for a variety of housing types and densities.

Action 3: Provide incentives to promote affordable housing options. Examples of these incentives include:

- Low-income Tax Credits
- New Market Tax Credit
- Innovative Funding Source
- Inclusionary Housing Ordinance
- Step Up mortgage Program
- Mortgage Credit Certifications

Action 4: Develop a revolving affordable housing trust fund and other funding streams.

Action 5: Promote the use of permitted Accessory Dwelling allowances in the City's zoning ordinance to increase the affordable housing rental stock.

Action 6: Collaborate with CDFI to increase access to capital for homebuyers and developers.

2. Eastern Area Framework

Action 1: Focus expansion of affordable housing on land owned by public agencies within the City to reduce the acquisition costs for developers.¹²² Examples include:

- The costs associated with identifying, rezoning and acquiring land can sometimes serve as an impediment to developing affordable housing, given that it requires substantial equity on the part of the developer early in the development process when there is little to no cash flow from the project. By providing publicly-owned sites— public hospital corporations, police and fire departments, school boards, and other administrative entities – at no or reduced cost, the City can help affordable housing developers avoid paying the high costs of acquiring land. Furthermore, the City should establish a process for expediting the rezoning of publicly owned properties that will be used for affordable housing. This would help to reduce time and expense on the part of the developer.

¹²² Eastern Area Framework. <https://www.imaginebham.com/east-birmingham.html>



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Birmingham Comprehensive Plan

The 2012 City of Birmingham's Comprehensive Plan was the first full comprehensive plan updated for the city since 1961. The following are a few of the actions identified in the document that also intersect with fair housing protections and goals.¹²³

- Nearly two-thirds of Birmingham housing units are single-family houses. Expanding the housing stock to include multifamily housing, both accessible and affordable.
- City of Birmingham households are almost equally divided between owners (49 percent) and renters (51 percent). Yet, housing vacancy rates are high with 18 percent of Birmingham's housing units are vacant—for rent or sale, or out of the market and seven percent of total units are vacant and out of the market. The continued need for homeownership rates within the city is needed.
- Some of Birmingham's housing stock is old and obsolete and does not meet modern demand. A continued need for land use and zoning codes to update the city's housing quality as a factor in addressing access to fair housing within the City itself.
- Market rate housing is affordable to the household making the median regional income, but the city has many households with incomes well below the regional median. An economic incentive to develop affordable housing within the city as the disparity in income and housing access, both quality and affordability, continue to widen. The median sales price for a single-family house in late 2011 was \$116,000, while the average cost of building a new house is \$130,000.
- There are approximately 6,000 occupied publicly-assisted housing units owned by the Housing Authority or assisted through Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. The City of Birmingham must push for affordable housing funding that addresses the disproportionate number of households in need of affordable housing.
- The Housing Authority also owns an additional unoccupied 1,951 units slated for improvements or other projects and administers 5,138 Housing Choice Vouchers, also known as Section 8.
- Two HOPE VI have successfully transformed public housing into mixed-income developments, downtown and in Ensley, and the Housing Authority has applied for a federal Choice Neighborhoods Initiative implementation grant to transform the Loveman public housing development in North Titusville. Federal funding to the city for community development and housing programs has declined significantly since the 1980s. The city has made strides in partnering and collaborating with local housing developers and community-based organizations on the issue of housing.

¹²³2012 City of Birmingham Comprehensive Plan. Available at: <https://www.birminghamal.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ExecutiveSummary.pdf>



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XIV. Impediments to Fair Housing Choice

The following are the identified impediments based on the assessment conducted throughout the 2020 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice process. The identified impediments to fair housing access and choice represent ongoing issues in Birmingham, such as access to affordable housing, social and environmental justice, and home lending disparities, as well as newly identified barriers, such as housing quality and some local zoning policies. Along with the identified impediments, a set of recommendations and action steps are provided to guide the work of Birmingham for the next five years as it furthers fair housing goals and ensures the protections of protected classes in the community.

A. 2020 Drafted Impediments

The following impediments are presented in no particular order and are not weighted. Additionally, impediments to fair housing choice have been identified and included for populations outside of the protected classes.

- **Affordable Housing:** Lack of affordable housing units available to low-income residents, families, and other protected classes.
- **Housing Quality:** Available affordable housing stock is aging, while new housing production has not met the affordability or accessibility needs of low-income residents, older residents, persons with disabilities, and other protected classes.
- **Inequitable Community Development:** Lower wages, access to equitable transit, and inadequate educational opportunities for communities of color and protected classes impact housing stability, social mobility, and potential displacement.
- **Social and Environmental Justice:** Persistent social justice and environmental concerns for low-income and minority neighborhoods hinder fair housing protections and access to greater social opportunities.
- **Home Lending Disparities:** Low-income and protected classes lack equitable access to home lending opportunities and market capital.
- **Local Policies:** Some land use, zoning, and building code policies, such as site selection, limits on alternative housing, minimum floor space requirements, and a lack of a local accessibility building code, may create additional hurdles to housing choice and access for protected classes.
- **Reasonable Accommodation:** A lack of a reasonable accommodation protocol in the local zoning code creates ambiguity and potential housing access barriers for persons with disabilities.
- **Fair Housing Education and Enforcement:** A lack of community awareness of fair housing protections limit the impact of fair housing education and outreach efforts.
- **Segregation:** Historic segregation patterns and current concentrations of poverty continue to disproportionately impact communities of color and protected classes.



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B. 2020 Drafted Recommendations

In addition to the identified impediments, the following recommendations and action steps have been identified to guide the fair housing goals and work of Birmingham for the next five years.

- **Affordable Housing:** *Lack of affordable housing units available to low-income residents, families, and other protected classes.*

With nearly 40 percent of households paying more than 30 percent of their monthly income into housing costs and a limited existing housing supply, the City will continue its housing preservation efforts and help expand affordable housing options in Birmingham by working with private developers, the public housing authority, and other stakeholders to leverage existing funding sources. The City will also continue to explore potential new funding sources, such as local bonds and tax credits, that may help incentivize greater production of affordable housing in the jurisdiction.

- **Housing Quality:** *Available affordable housing stock is aging, while new housing production has not met the affordability or accessibility needs of low-income residents, older residents, persons with disabilities, and other protected classes.*

The City of Birmingham will continue to leverage its ongoing Framework planning process to identify opportunities to invest in rehabilitation and repair efforts of the aging housing stock. The City will also incentivize the creation of new housing opportunities, through its programming and funding, that are accessible to older residents, persons with disabilities, and protected classes in the jurisdiction.

Lastly, the City and the Birmingham Land Bank Authority will continue to identify opportunities to acquire blighted properties and to decrease the high levels of vacancy in the jurisdiction that are directly and indirectly contributing to lower home values and public safety concerns.

- **Inequitable Community Development:** *Lower wages, access to equitable transit, and adequate educational opportunities for communities of color and protected classes impact housing stability, social mobility, and potential displacement.*

The disparate impact of inequitable community development continues to affect protected classes and communities of color within Birmingham. For example, refusal of Section 8 and other rent subsidies from single parents with children, minorities, persons with disabilities, or members of other protected classes continue to persist. Moreover, the lack of adequate access to transit and quality education continues to limit the social mobility and economic prosperity of many residents in the jurisdiction.

The City of Birmingham, in concert with its various departments, will continue to leverage and expand access to greater economic and community development opportunities by investing in public services and programs that incentivize higher-paying jobs and educational opportunities for all residents. The City will also continue to play an active role in monitoring the link between employment access, transportation, and the overall wellbeing of low-income residents.

- **Social and Environmental Justice:** *Persistent environmental and social concerns for low-income and minority neighborhoods hinder fair housing protections and access to greater social opportunities.*

As a once-thriving industrial city, the effects of a post-industrial economy continue to affect the low-income and minority residents that have continued to live in under-resourced communities and poor housing stock. As



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it is common in post-industrial cities, the presence of environmental hazards coupled with racially constructed policies that further limit access to clean, safe, and affordable housing choice, have created communities that lack environmental justice.

The City of Birmingham is committed to continuing its effort to identify opportunities to provide greater access to environmentally sound and adequate housing opportunities and to encourage the social participation of historically underserved communities in future planning efforts.

The City, through its Community Development Department, will also continue to work with the EPA in order to obtain grant funding to remediate potentially hazardous areas/brownfields and to develop environmental standards regarding residential areas while conducting community education surveys, outreach, and continued observation of affected communities.

- **Home Lending Disparities:** *Low-income and protected classes lack equitable access to home lending opportunities and capital.*

As presented in this analysis, the high incidence of mortgage denials and general access to home lending in the city correlates with historic redlining and illuminates current limitations for low-income communities and protected classes to access capital. The City of Birmingham will work with local institutions to understand the key reasons for such trends and work directly with potential homebuyers through its programming and outreach efforts. Such efforts will include workshops on financial literacy, credit scores, and down payment assistance.

- **Local Policies:** *Some land use, zoning, and building code policies, such as site selection, limits on alternative housing, minimum floor space requirements, and a lack of a local accessibility building code, may create additional hurdles to housing choice and access for protected classes.*

The City of Birmingham is currently undergoing a complete overhaul of its zoning ordinances, which will include a close look at its site selection, treatment of alternative housing solutions (such as Accessory Dwelling Units and Manufacturing Housing), minimum floor space requirements, and accessibility in its building code. In the meantime, the City will continue to explore ways to limit any potential impact current zoning ordinances may have on protected classes and to monitor any disproportionate unintended effects through conversations with stakeholders and a review of new and pending developments.

- **Reasonable Accommodation:** *A lack of a reasonable accommodation protocol in the local zoning code creates ambiguity and potential housing access barriers for persons with disabilities.*

During the last few years, the City of Birmingham has actively explored ways to integrate reasonable accommodations into its zoning ordinances. The City's current zoning ordinance update is also reviewing ways to include reasonable accommodation as a key component of local land use and zoning policies.

- **Fair Housing Education and Enforcement:** *A lack of community awareness of fair housing protections limit the impact of fair housing education and outreach efforts.*

The City of Birmingham, the Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama, and the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District will continue to collaborate to increase public awareness, training, workshops, and other outreach activities to explain fair housing issues to landlords and encourage tenants to report discrimination.



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- **Segregation:** *Historic segregation patterns and new concentrations of poverty continue to disproportionately impact communities of color and protected classes.*

The City of Birmingham will continue, through its Framework Planning and Comprehensive Plan Updates, to identify opportunities and actions to address higher concentrations of poverty and the lingering impact of historical segregation patterns. Moreover, the City will continue to leverage and retool its existing funding and programs to meet the needs of communities most impacted by historical and new forms of segregation in the area.

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XV. Conclusions and Public Comments

This chapter, drafted after the Public Comment Period ends, provides a summary of the conclusions of the assessment process and the official response from the City of Birmingham to the comments received during the Public Comment Period.

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XVI. Appendix A: Survey Results

The following appendix provides the full results of the Community Needs Survey conducted as part of this assessment.

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